GOLOVKIN vs. LEMIEUX

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

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Canelo Alvarez faces another future Hall of Famer in November.

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MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO II

Will Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. share a stage again in the near future?

I don't know anyone who believes Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s fight against Andre Berto on Sept. 12 will be his last even if he insists it is.

Too much cash to be made. "Money" can continue to make $32 million or more per fight for the foreseeable future. Who can blame him for wanting to take full advantage of his earning power while he still has it?

That's why I like one theory that explains why he chose to face an opponent as unworthy as the limited Berto: This is merely a stay-sharp fight in advance of something much, much bigger.

And that something bigger could be Manny Pacquiao.

I don't think fans are clamoring to see that rematch after the debacle that took place on May 2 in Las Vegas, a boring decision victory by Mayweather after which Pacquiao claimed he was injured.

It's still the biggest fight that could be made, though, one that would earn both fighters another windfall in part because people will wonder what Pacquiao can do with two good shoulders.

And I suspect Mayweather is open to it even though he was angered by his rival's post-fight announcement. Again, there's the money. He won't make $200 million-plus but $100 million is reasonable. He can't make that kind of money against anyone else.

And because of the ease with which he won the first fight – 10-2 in rounds on one card, 8-4 on two – I don't believe he sees Pacquiao as a significant challenge.

At the same time, he knows a second victory over Pacquiao will do wonders for his legacy. After all, he will have beaten the second-best fighter of his generation twice. That's meaningful even this late in their careers.

On top of that, victories over Berto and then Pacquiao would leave Mayweather with a nice, round 50-0 record, one victory better than Rocky Marciano when he retired.

So it would be a win-win-win situation for Mayweather. I don't see how he can pass that up.

Would I rather he fight Gennady Golovkin at a reasonable catchweight? Of course. That fight also would generate an obscene amount of money and, with a victory, do even more for his legacy than a second win over Pacquiao.

That fight is too difficult for Mayweather at this point in his career, though. It makes sense in terms of money and legacy but the risk is too big to make it good business.

Obviously, I'm only speculating that Pacquiao remains a centerpiece in Mayweather's plans but I think it makes perfect sense.

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OPENING SHOT

NAOKI FUKUDA

Jessie Vargas' mammoth punch to the head of Tim Bradley (left) ignited a strange series of events in the final seconds of their fight. Bradley won but not without controversy.

COME OUT WRITING

WARD WRONGED

I am extremely disappointed in THE RING Magazine's decision to strip super middleweight Andre Ward of his championship belt based on your so-called policies by not facing a Top 5 opponent in a two-year time frame and for being inactive for more than 18 months. Normally I would agree with your policies but there are good reasons for Ward's inactivity. First, he was sidelined with a shoulder injury, which required surgery. Second, he had bitter legal battles with his former promoter. And this isn't to mention the absurdity of removing the second-best fighter from your pound-for-pound list.

John Dundon
St. Louis

LISTON TOOK DIVE

In regard to the article "Double Shot" by Don Stradley (July 2015), it is disappointing to see the promotion of the idea that Sonny Liston was actually knocked out by Muhammad Ali's Anchor Punch. I saw the fight in a closed-circuit venue in Michigan and I saw the punch land … but it never would have knocked Liston out. How can you tell it was a fake knockout? By reading Liston's body language after the punch landed. The fact is Liston was a very poor actor. The audience knew it was a fake by how Liston went down and what he did afterward, which was to lie on the canvas, eyes bright and alert while looking up at Ali. It was a complete sham.

Oliver W. Tuthill Jr.
Seattle

Editor's note: THE RING stands behind Don Stradley and the conclusions of his sources.

LISTON DIDN'T TAKE DIVE

I read the article "Double Shot," a look back on Muhammad Ali's mysterious KO of Sonny Liston with much interest and nostalgia. The punch was real. Sports Illustrated published a frame-by-frame display of the punch shortly after the fight. If I remember correctly, the action was filmed by an overhead camera. That was back in 1965 but maybe the film still exists and can be archived.

Jerry S. Byrd
Washington D.C.

THE CASE FOR LEMIEUX

I always feel that a puncher has a chance, which applies to the fight between Gennady Golovkin and David Lemieux. I am a fan of Golovkin but, unlike most of his hardcore fans, I think Lemieux is a formidable opponent because he's an explosive puncher. He does not need to wear Gennady down for his punches to be effective. He'll have to go through hell to land his shots but I think he has the mentality to do it. Gennady has proven that he will trade shots and this is the first guy since Curtis Stevens who has the power to actually cause some sort of damage. Unlike Stevens, Lemieux's corner will not have to constantly tell him to let his hands go; that comes naturally to the Canadian bomber. And although he gives away rounds due to lack of technique, inability to cut off the ring and lack of polish, we all know what kind of action he ignites when he throws caution to the wind and tries to decapitate his opponent. Makes for an exciting fight. This one is no different.

Ronnie McGill
Attleboro, Mass.

HEAVYWEIGHT INTRIGUE

The upcoming heavyweight contest between Tyson Fury and Wladimir Klitschko is interesting for a number of reasons. There is the natural curiosity of what will happen when two giants collide, regardless of how (un)skilled the challenger is. There is their polar opposite personalities. Klitschko is a multilingual, suave and sophisticated champion with a Ph.D. while Fury is a rough and rowdy Traveller who finishes his fights with a song and a dance. It's also worth thinking about the respective styles of the two big men. Both are deceptively athletic for their size and both use their size to stifle and bully smaller heavyweights. I think Fury's performance is more important than the result. Indeed, Klitschko's dominance is such that all fans can expect to see is a worthy challenger rather than an outright threat to his belt. Is Fury an outright threat? It's unlikely but not impossible.

Miles Carabine
London

POOR RIGO

When will someone step up and fight Guillermo Rigondeaux? The 34-year-old Cuban has become the most feared boxer and not much criticism has fallen on those who have steered clear of him. Carl Frampton, Scott Quigg and Leo Santa Cruz have all been called out and all have responded by either expressing that the timing isn't right yet or by jumping to a higher weight class. Their reasoning is that Rigo is too defensive and will fail to draw a big enough audience to make the fight as profitable as they would like. This is where their logic is flawed. If the main goal is to increase visibility and purses, then beating Rigo and taking his junior featherweight belts immediately adds leverage to future fight negotiations. Why not beat him and take his titles? One boring fight for three belts doesn't sound like a bad trade, does it? Unless they know they can't win.

Anthony Pereira
Miami

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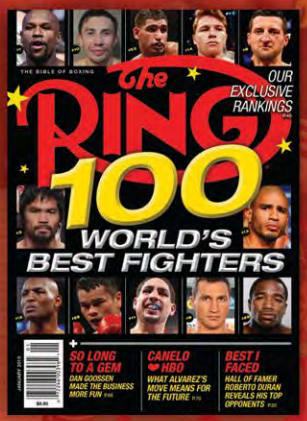

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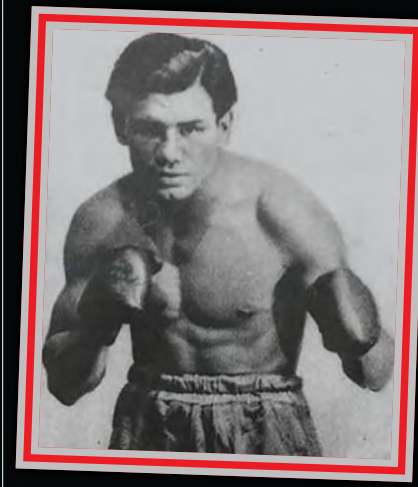
ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, we link Battling Shaw, the first Mexican world champion, with current Mexican star Canelo Alvarez. We challenged several readers with a passion for Advanced Degrees to do it in as few steps as possible and Gregg Morgan was the runaway winner, doing it in only eight steps even though Shaw last fought in 1938 – 77 years ago. Take a look:



BATTLING SHAW, FOUGHT

KID AZTECA, WHO FOUGHT

EL CONSCRIPTO, WHO FOUGHT

BABY VASQUEZ, WHO FOUGHT

JUAN ELIZONDO, WHO FOUGHT

JORGE VACA, WHO FOUGHT

JOSE LUIS CRUZ, WHO FOUGHT

SHANE MOSLEY, WHO FOUGHT

« CANELO ALVAREZ

Canelo Alvarez is the latest in long line of excellent Mexican boxers.

GREG GORMAN

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Muhammad Ali, who turned 73 in January, is the 11th oldest former heavyweight titleholder of all time and the oldest former champ still alive. Here are the heavyweight kings who had the longest lives:

Max Schmeling was only seven-plus months from his 100th birthday when he died in 2005.

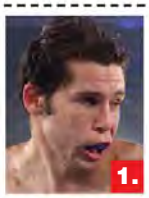
99	MAX SCHMELING
91	JACK SHARKEY
87	JACK DEMPSEY
86	JESS WILLARD
81	GENE TUNNEY
80	JERSEY JOE WALCOTT
77	JAMES J. JEFFRIES
76	INGEMAR JOHANSSON
75	ERNIE TERRELL
74	JIMMY ELLIS

Note: Sonny Liston was the youngest former heavyweight titleholder at the time of his death in 1970, although there is no record of his birth. He was as young as 38 but might've been a few years older.

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 **CARLOS CUADRAS** JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER ★
2 **JHONNY GONZALEZ** FEATHERWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ 3 **PEDRO GUEVARA** JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD:	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
 1.	"Tambora (drum)."	"I drive a VW Jetta and my dream is a **Mustang**."	"Seafood, Chilorio (slow-cooked pork)."	"No tattoos."	"Chicharito (Javier Hernandez, a Mexican soccer player)."	"'Rocky' I and III."	"'Candy Crush' and '**Pacman**.'"
2.	"Banda el Recodo (a large band from Sinaloa, Mexico)."	"BMW."	"**Pasta**."	"No."	"**Sexy Star** (female wrestler and Gonzalez's wife)."	"'Rocky.'"	"'Pro Evolution Soccer.'"
3.	"**Carlos Santana**."	"**Mustang**. In fact, now that I'm world champion I'm getting a brand new one."	"Seafood from Mazatlan, shrimp especially."	"I don't have any."	"Lionel Messi. He is one of a kind, a phenom in soccer."	"'Django Unchained.'"	"Sorry, I don't play video games."

— **Anson Wainwright**

SCHMELING: GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

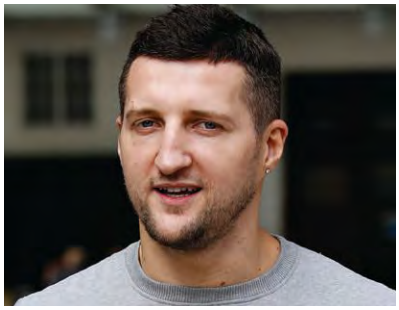
GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

GOOD

I'm officially a fan of Ronda Rousey now. The MMA star will never face Floyd Mayweather Jr. in the ring but she sure delivered a body blow against the No. 1 boxer in the world in July. Rousey was being interviewed on the red carpet after winning the ESPY for Best Fighter, beating out Mayweather (and others) even though he easily defeated Manny Pacquiao in the richest fight ever on May 2. Her comment during the interview cut to the bone: "I wonder how Floyd feels being beat by a woman for once. I'd like to see you pretend to not know who I am now." She was referring to Mayweather's convictions for violence against women, as well as a recent comment by Mayweather that he had never heard of Rousey. Well done, Ronda. I don't want to pile onto Mayweather. Honestly. The problem, in my opinion, is that he won't take responsibility for his actions. He downplayed the punch with which Ray Rice knocked out his then-fiancee, saying, "Things happen." And he called charges against him "hearsay." To her credit, Rousey hasn't given up on Mayweather. She told BoxingScene.com: "I think there is a possibility for him to redeem himself but I haven't seen that kind of effort from him yet."



BAD

This item is "bad" for selfish reasons: One of my favorite fighters – Carl Froch – announced in July that he was retiring from boxing. Froch wasn't the boxer or athlete that Joe Calzaghe was. He certainly wasn't the showman Naseem Hamed was. Even so, I'll take him over either Hall of Famer in a second. "The Cobra" was only a solid boxer but he was a fighter through and through. I didn't think much of him the first few times I saw him, dismissing him as a crude, limited brawler with a pretty girlfriend. But gradually I came to realize that he was my type of fighter – fiery, supremely confident, intelligent and as tough both physically and mentally as any fighter in recent years. I'll never forget his persistence against Jermain Taylor, whom he stopped in the 12th round in savage fashion. The manner in which he dismantled Lucian Bute was breathtaking. And no one could go out on a more dramatic note, a single right hand that put George Groves down and out in front 80,000 fans at Wembley Stadium. That's storybook stuff. Froch isn't the greatest fighter of his generation but I think I'll miss him as much as any active fighter. Enjoy your retirement, Carl. You earned it.

WORSE

I had planned to lay into Billy Joe Saunders for comments he made during a video interview with IFL TV about how he feels about women in boxing but, to his credit, he took the wind out of my sails. He said: "I think women are there for sex every night, hard sex. Women's (sic) there for cleaning, cooking, washing and sex. They're not there to put a head guard on and get punched in the face, although I must say Katie Taylor's done extremely well and she once punched Frankie Gavin up in sparring. All jokes aside, that's my opinion on women but I'm just a sex maniac." Of course, that didn't sit well with Taylor, the Irish Olympic gold medalist. "I feel sorry for his wife and daughter if that's his only view of women," she tweeted. Saunders backtracked on the same video, saying, "I'm not taking nothing way from (women boxers). I'm giving them full respect. They've done things I haven't done. They've won Olympic golds and stuff like that." And he fully apologized on a subsequent video, which was a wise move. Let this be a lesson to others: Just don't say idiotic things in the first place.

ROUSEY: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; FROCH: ALEX HUCKLE/GC IMAGES; SAUNDERS: LEIGH DAWNEY/GETTY IMAGES; SCHMELING: GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is his own matchmaker. He fights whomever he wants regardless of what others think, including you. That doesn't mean you shouldn't be heard, though. So we asked: **If you could've chosen Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s opponent on Sept. 12, who would it have been?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

64.02	GENNADY GOLOVKIN
8.95	AMIR KHAN
6.26	KELL BROOK
5.49	KEITH THURMAN
3.14	TIM BRADLEY
2.76	MIGUEL COTTO
2.26	OTHER
1.98	ERISLANDY LARA
1.80	TERENCE CRAWFORD
1.15	DANNY GARCIA
1.03	LUCAS MATTHYSSE
0.67	ANDRE BERTO
0.49	SHAWN PORTER

Note: 5,542 readers voted

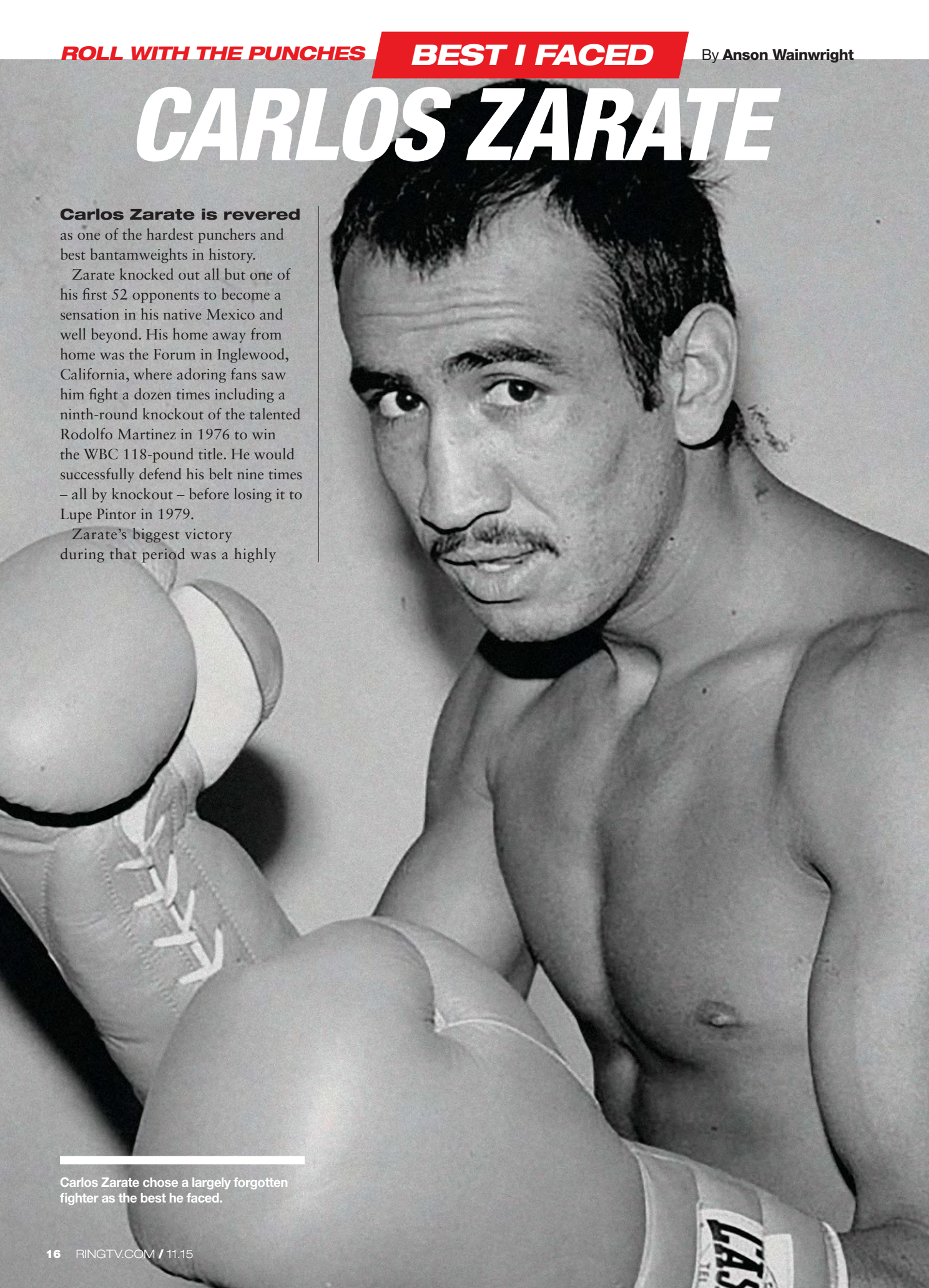
By **Anson Wainwright**

CARLOS ZARATE

Carlos Zarate is revered as one of the hardest punchers and best bantamweights in history.

Zarate knocked out all but one of his first 52 opponents to become a sensation in his native Mexico and well beyond. His home away from home was the Forum in Inglewood, California, where adoring fans saw him fight a dozen times including a ninth-round knockout of the talented Rodolfo Martinez in 1976 to win the WBC 118-pound title. He would successfully defend his belt nine times – all by knockout – before losing it to Lupe Pintor in 1979.

Zarate's biggest victory during that period was a highly



Carlos Zarate chose a largely forgotten fighter as the best he faced.

anticipated clash with fellow slugger and WBA titleholder Alfonso Zamora in a battle of the Z-boys in 1977. It was a non-title bout because neither governing body would sanction the meeting but the fans embraced it fully.

One reason: The fighters had an insane combined record of 74-0 – with 73 knockouts! No one was surprised when Zarate ended matters in four rounds.

"It was a pride for me to defeat another Mexican undefeated world champion and I was also proud being the protagonist in a classic historic fight," said Zarate.

The fight for which Zarate might be best remembered was his unsuccessful challenge of WBC junior featherweight titleholder Wilfredo Gomez in a Mexico vs. Puerto Rico showdown in 1978, in the midst of his bantamweight run. Gomez won by fifth-round knockout, ending Zarate's perfect record at 52-0.

Mexican Salvador Sanchez exacted revenge for Zarate by taking Gomez's title three years later.

Zarate retired in 1979 but returned to the ring almost seven years later, at 34. He plowed through a string of marginal opponents before losing to WBC junior featherweight champ Jeff Fenech in his final title fight.

Zarate fought once more, losing by knockout to Daniel Zaragoza, before calling it quits for good with one of the great records in the history of the sport: 66-4, with 63 knockouts.

The now-64-year-old considers his victory over Martinez his best performance.

"I fulfilled my dream of becoming a world champion." he said. He added that the achievements of which he is most proud are "having defended the title nine times and becoming a Hall of Fame member (in 1994)."

One regret is that he never fought fellow Mexican legend Ruben Olivares. "That would have been a historic fight," he said.

Today, Zarate enjoys spending time with his family and passing on his considerable knowledge to children at the Deportivo Metro sports center in his hometown of Mexico City.

Zarate kindly took time out of his schedule to talk about the best fighters he fought in 10 key categories.

BEST JAB

Lupe Pintor: He caught me a lot with his jab, especially in the 12th, 13th and 14th rounds. (Championship fights were reduced from 15 to 12 rounds in the 1980s.) I felt he had a very powerful jab. Unfortunately, he snatched my championship. Many years have gone since then and I have seen and carefully analyzed what happened that night.

BEST DEFENSE

Paul Ferreri: The Australian, Paul Ferreri. It was my first title defense. He had a lot of experience and made me feel like a rookie. He'd had lots of fights. In the 11th round I felt I didn't have enough oxygen to finish the fight. Fortunately, I cut his eyebrow and in the 12th round I got to him and the referee had to stop the fight so I was able to retain my title. Nevertheless, it was not that easy. I learned a lot in that fight.

BEST CHIN

Jeff Fenech: I punched him with everything I had ... and still he stayed up!

FASTEST HANDS

Daniel Zaragoza: He defeated me in the 10th round. I should not have taken that fight, either. I was 37 years old and I wasn't well prepared. I shouldn't have done that. Maybe because of my age I wasn't able to see his hands or feet. He punched me and ran so I couldn't connect on him.

FASTEST FEET

Cesar Deciga: I knocked him out on the third round. Up to then, he moved pretty fast.

SMARTEST

Wilfredo Gomez: Honestly, all fighters that I faced in my first stage couldn't last with me. I would say Wilfredo Gomez. I have to accept his courage. He was more intelligent than me, even though I was very sick. He had many advantages for being that good and also for fighting in his country. He hit me when I had a knee on the canvas. I gave him a fight, though. When Salvador Sanchez beat him, Sal showed he was more intelligent.

STRONGEST

Alfonso Zamora: He had a string of KOs like me. He was in great shape and had a great punch. I trained very well for this fight. I was based for 40 days at Miraflores, Estado de Mexico, and it was one of my best training preparations. Due to that, I felt superior that night and that he couldn't knock me out ... even using a club! Those were four exceptionally hard rounds.

BEST PUNCHER

Gomez: Although in that fight I was very sick. He was very effective and he proved it in the presence of many fans. I shouldn't have taken that fight. I was feeling very bad physically.

BEST BOXING SKILLS

Victor Ramirez: I defeated him by decision after having 23 knockouts in a row. He had a really good defense and he stayed up for the 10 rounds. The fight was very beneficial for me because he was a great fighter and he was well prepared. He withstood the punches and this gave me a lot of experience. He made me understand that I shouldn't be that confident, I couldn't knock out all my rivals and I should learn to work in fights.

BEST OVERALL

Rodolfo Martinez: Martinez was great but he could not take my rhythm and I knocked him out in the ninth round. He won against Rafael Herrera, Chucho Castillo in an era when the bantamweights were great. He switched from southpaw to right and he also hit very hard.

By **David Greisman**

WE KNOW HOW THIS ENDS

IT REALLY NEVER MATTERED MUCH WHO FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. CHOSE TO FIGHT ON SEPT. 12. THE RESULT WILL BE FAMILIAR.

Millions wanted to see Floyd Mayweather Jr. fight Manny Pacquiao. Many of them didn't enjoy the manner in which he won. Few wanted him to face Andre Berto. And some might even wonder what Berto did to deserve the bout. The answer, of course, is nothing.

But it really doesn't matter who Mayweather faces on Sept. 12. No matter what, we know what will occur.

Had it been a quality opponent, then Mayweather would've boxed brilliantly but cautiously, picking his spots to unleash shots en route to a decision win. That would've preserved his perfect record at the expense of those fans who demand action.

Picking a lower-tier foe like Berto makes this another money grab for "Money," though thankfully one that could be more exciting than the last money grab. If Mayweather doesn't feel threatened, then that would allow him to take risks he normally wouldn't take and actually entertain fans.

Mayweather's choices in and out of the ring are carefully calculated. That's worked for him. He has divided the boxing audience into those who will shell out to see him win and those who will shell out in hopes of seeing him lose, multiplied the various streams of revenue and added to his paydays while

Floyd Mayweather Jr. isn't likely to give us much drama on Sept. 12.

JAMIE SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES

subtracting all suspense.

People still pay. They will pay thinking this is his last fight, as he indicated. They will even pay again should that, too, turn out to be a calculated statement and he instead returns for more in 2016.

He remains great. The victory over Pacquiao only confirmed what he had long said. He clearly outclassed the only other fighter one could argue was the best of this generation. Mayweather beats Top 10 welterweights, bigger fighters, younger boxers, anyone and everyone he's faced.

He deserves a lot of credit. It's just a shame that "Money" doesn't give the money's worth to those who've provided him with a lot of cash.

★

Keith Thurman is among the nearly 200 boxers who know to thank adviser Al Haymon after every boxing match. Haymon's name tends to come just before or just after God, though it is Haymon who tends to be the one in control of their fate. That's why the person who Thurman thanks is also the one he should blame for why he will not get to face Mayweather before the best boxer and biggest star of this generation retires.

Thurman has called out Mayweather since last year. And why shouldn't he want the fight? It's a huge challenge that comes with a huge payday. But why shouldn't he get the fight? Because Thurman hasn't yet shown that he deserves Mayweather. Of the last six fights he's had, the number that have come against opponents who were then in the Top 10 is the same as his nickname: "One Time."

Even that bout, against Robert Guerrero earlier this year, came when Guerrero was clearly declining. The rest were good wins for an up-and-coming prospect striving to be seen as a contender.

Often, though not always, he's faced foes who had already fallen to other welterweights. He got the leftovers that lost instead of the winners themselves:

Thurman stopped Carlos Quintana in 2012. Andre Berto had done the same in 2010.

Thurman outpointed Jan Zaveck in 2013. Berto, again, had beaten him in 2011.

Thurman won a war over Jesus Soto Karass in 2013. Soto Karass was actually coming off a win over Berto, although he had already lost a technical knockout to Marcos Maidana in 2012. Maidana, of course, went on to get Mayweather twice in 2014.

Thurman destroyed Julio Diaz in 2014. Diaz had dropped two straight decisions, to Amir Khan and Shawn Porter, before that.

And Thurman's latest victory, a stoppage of Luis Collazo this past July, came 14 months after Khan won a wide one over Collazo.

Thurman didn't get Khan or Maidana or Porter. And the bout with Collazo was poorly timed if Thurman were to face Mayweather this fall, given that it was scheduled just two months before Mayweather's usual September date.

Even Adrien Broner, who belongs at junior welterweight, has faced better competition at 147. Of course, Broner lost to Maidana and Porter.

It's Haymon who maneuvers his fighters' careers like puzzle pieces for a constantly changing picture. Thurman has fit into other plans, especially this year when Haymon wanted an entertaining main event for the first "Premier Boxing Champions" broadcast on a new network, headlining on NBC in March and ESPN in July.

Thurman has done exactly what's been asked of him. He's undefeated and continues to improve. But before he can face the best, he needs to show what he can do against someone — anyone, really — of the rest.

★

It's no longer a surprise when Chris Arreola, Adrien Broner or Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. do something disappointing. What's shocking is that they still haven't learned how not to let themselves down.

They haven't learned because their bad behavior was rewarded before it harmed them. And they are still being rewarded even now that their bad habits have damaged their performances and reputations.

Arreola continues to come in too heavy and unable to fight to the best of his ability, except now he's even having trouble against Curtis Harper and Fred Kassi, the kind of opponents he would've blown out before.

Broner is brave enough to challenge bigger welterweights like Marcos Maidana and Shawn Porter but he's not disciplined enough anymore to put in the work in the gym that would help him put in a better effort on fight night.

Chavez Jr. got so used to facing undersized foes and negotiating advantageous weight limits that he wound up being too small for light heavyweight Andrzej Fonfara and then was too lazy to make 170 pounds against the comparably tiny Marcos Reyes.

All got by in the past, to their own detriment. It's harder to break their bad habits now, even though now is when it matters most.

The problem is they get spotlight fights and seven-figure checks no matter what they do or whom they face. For guys who gain so much weight between bouts, their hunger otherwise appears to be gone.

'DIP WAS LARGER THAN LIFE'

BUT NEW NYSAC CHAIRMAN **TOM HOOVER** SAID OLD FRIEND **WILT CHAMBERLAIN** WOULD'VE BEEN SCHOOLED BY MUHAMMAD ALI IN THE RING

Tom Hoover was confirmed in June as the new chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission, which makes him one of the most influential regulators in boxing.

Tom Hoover was confirmed in June as the new chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission. That makes him one of the most influential regulators in boxing.

Hoover is best known to sports fans as a basketball player. An All-American at Villanova University in Philadelphia, he was the sixth pick in the 1963 NBA draft. Playing for the New York Knicks, he logged 988 minutes during the 1963-64 season, averaging 5.6 rebounds and 4.8 points per game. After a second year on the Knicks roster, he spent time with the St. Louis Hawks before moving to the rival American Basketball Association.

Hoover entered the NBA at a time when the league had stars like Oscar Robertson, Jerry West, Elgin Baylor and, most notably, Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain. Chamberlain played a special role in his life.

"I met Dip in the summer of 1959," Hoover said. "Over the years, he had a lot of nicknames. His favorite was 'The Big Dipper' so I called him Dip. I'd just graduated from Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington D.C. and was going into my freshman year at Villanova. There was a great basketball tradition back then. Each summer, they had a weekend when teams from Philadelphia and New York would play three all-star games against each other in one city or the other. They rotated the city back and forth from year to year. It was high-school players vs. high-school players, college players vs. college players, and pros vs. pros. I was in the college game."

"At one point," Hoover continued, "I heard someone shouting, 'Come on, Hoov! Block that shot! Box out! Rebound! Come on, Hoov! Let's go!' I turned to see who was yelling. And 'Omigod! That's Wilt Chamberlain. He knows my name.'"

Chamberlain was 23 years old at the time and about to start his first season in the NBA with the Philadelphia Warriors. Prior to that, he'd played two years at the University of Kansas and a year with the Harlem Globetrotters. He was the most talked-about, most anticipated rookie in league history.

"We won the Philly-New York game," Hoover said. "Then Dip introduced himself and took me to a club on Broad Street called Pep's, where Dizzy Gillespie was playing. After that, we went around the corner and heard Miles Davis, Cannonball Adderly and John Coltrane. At the end of the evening, he drove me back to school in his purple Eldorado Cadillac convertible. I have no idea why he singled me out that day but he did."

Chamberlain – with his unique combination of size, agility and strength – changed the way basketball was played. He was the NBA's dominant player for 14

seasons and rewrote the record book like no athlete in any sport ever has.

"Dip was head and shoulders above everybody else," Hoover said. "He was 7-1, maybe a bit taller, with incredible upper-body strength. He was so much stronger than anyone else in the league. Bill Russell won with the Celtics because he had great teams around him for his entire career. Dip rarely had that. When he did, he won."

Meanwhile, the Chamberlain-Hoover friendship flourished.

"After that first night," Hoover said, "I didn't see Dip again until the NBA season started. Then I started going to Warriors games and he'd drive me back to the campus afterward. We talked about music, politics, women. Wilt liked women but the numbers you hear are an exaggeration. His parents lived in Philadelphia and I was in their home for dinner a lot."

Then Hoover's own NBA sojourn began.

Chamberlain kept an apartment in New York. Hoover played cards there with Wilt, Calvin Ramsey and a high-school student named Lew Alcindor (later known as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar). Chamberlain took Hoover to Las Vegas and introduced him to Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and other members of the Rat Pack. He and Wilt made a commercial together for a shoe called Easy Walkers."

And there are other memories.

"Dip took me to Atlantic City a number of times," Hoover said. "The first time we went, we heard Sam Cooke. I was with the Knicks then. I remember parts of that night very well and other parts are blank. I was trying to drink with Dip, which I never did and which was a mistake. Champagne and Old Grand-Dad. The last thing I remember from that night was sitting in the middle of Kentucky Avenue, very drunk. Dip was laughing at me. The next thing I remember was waking up in my bed in New York. Dip had picked me up, put me in his car, drove me home, carried me into my apartment and put me to bed. I was 6-9, 235 pounds back then."

"People were always asking Dip for things and looking for him to pay the bill whenever they went out," Hoover continued. "That wasn't my style. I never asked him for anything and I think he liked that. He was always very generous with me. We never played on the same team in a game. But I went up against him when I was with the Knicks and Hawks. I played center. So when I was in the game, I had to guard him. Dip wanted me to be successful in the league but not against him."

Chamberlain's athletic prowess wasn't limited to basketball. He was a magnificent track and field athlete and an excellent volleyball player. He also came close to trying his hand at boxing.

"Dip was a smart guy," Hoover says. "And he had a good business sense. He knew how to make money."

There was a lot of talk in 1971 about Chamberlain fighting Muhammad Ali. But the discussions began in 1967.

"Ali was getting ready to fight Zora Folley," Hoover said. "Dip came to me and said, 'Hoov, we're going to make some money. I'm going to fight Muhammad Ali and you're going to manage me.'"

As for what happened next ...

"There were conversations back and forth," Hoover said. "Then, one day, I went over to Madison Square Garden to watch Ali when he was training for Folley. Ali was sparring. He saw me and shouted, 'That's a Wilt Chamberlain spy.' Then he got out of the ring, came over to me and started yelling, 'Tell that big guy he can't beat me. He's too slow. I'm too pretty. Here! Take this back to that big guy.' Then he threw 15 jabs like a machine-gun within an inch of my nose. That night, I told Dip, 'We can make some money. But he's going to beat your ass.'

Years later Chamberlain told this writer, "I took it seriously. I spent some time training with Cus D'Amato. I believed I was capable of going out there and representing myself in a way that would not be embarrassing. I didn't have to learn how to become a complete boxer. I was going to learn for eight or 10 months how to apply my strengths and skills against one person. One of the first things Cus said to me was, 'You're going to learn how to fight one man; that's all. We're going to know all the things you have to do and what you possess to do it with against this one person. There's no way that Ali can train to fight you. He won't know anything about you as a fighter because there's only one of you and no tapes.'"

"That was my edge," Chamberlain continued. "Ali would be coming in blind. He'd have no idea what he was facing, whereas I'd know what to expect. And, of course, I had God-given strength, size and athletic ability. If I'd been the odds-maker, I'd have made Muhammad a 10-1 favorite. But I truly believed there was a chance for me to throw one punch and take Ali out."

"That sounds great," Hoover said, looking back on that long-ago time. "But it wouldn't have happened."

Hoover's friendship with Chamberlain continued for decades. Then came a tragic day in 1999.

"Dip and I talked on the phone a lot," Hoover said. "One night, I called and left a message around 7 o'clock California time and he didn't call back. The next day, I heard on the radio that he'd died from heart failure. Dip was larger than life. That wasn't supposed to happen, not when he was 63 years old. Outside of family, no death ever hurt me as much as his did. He was a beautiful person. He helped me grow to manhood. I still miss him. Write something nice about him. He deserves it." ★

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "Thomas Hauser on Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

By **Brian Harty**

Carl Froch retired at the height of his career.

BLUE CHIPPER

If **Carl Froch** were a stock, his story would be written in the collective nocturnal emissions of Wall Street. Sorry for the image but his retirement, announced in mid-July, personified the creed that every Big Apple broker or suburban Buffett-wannabe yearns to uphold just once: Buy low, sell very high.

A few years back, a lot of boxing people didn't even know how to pronounce his name. Frock? But then they began to notice that the man from Nottingham was not-so-quietly putting together an astonishing resume: **Jean Pascal, Jermain Taylor, Andre Dirrell, Mikkel Kessler, Arthur Abraham, Glen Johnson, Andre Ward.** The loss to Ward in 2011 would be the only thing left un-rectified during a run of 12 consecutive world-title fights against the best super middleweights of the realm.

It ended when Froch, hoping to eradicate grumbles about a hasty stoppage in his favor, granted **George Groves** a rematch. 80,000 curious people paid to watch and what they saw was a column of one billion flaming bells connect the heavens with center ring as every cup in Wembley stadium spontaneously filled with beer and every newborn at nearby Northwick Park Hospital in unison uttered, "Carl." Or something like that. Froch knocked Groves out in the eighth.

There was talk about Las Vegas, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Andre Ward II, but ultimately Froch chose to walk away with his career at its pinnacle, his arms raised above a crushed Groves, the whole scene illuminated by fireworks. It's the sort of thing that makes Juan Manuel Marquez wake up screaming at 3 a.m.

People familiar with boxing (or baseball or just about anything else involving hands) were a little confused to see actor **Jake Gyllenhaal** leading with his left glove in posters for his boxing movie "Southpaw." As it turns out, there's a reason for that but revealing anything about this totally un-cliched, un-melodramatic and unpredictable film would just be wrong.

Mike Tyson recently filmed a music video with Madonna and described it to TVLine like this: "I'm in a cage. I'm a hostage. ... I'm chained. I'm naked. I just look like a savage. … I need to be tamed, man. I'm iconic."

The cause of death for **Tony Ayala Jr.**, whose body was found in a gym on May 12, was officially attributed to heroin following an investigation that concluded in July. The San Antonio middleweight, whose promising career was derailed by a rape conviction and other offenses, died at the age of 52.

Top Rank filed a $100 million lawsuit against **Al Haymon**, alleging that the creator of Premier Boxing Champions is using his deep pockets to monopolize the sport. The action drew support from **Oscar De La Hoya**, whose **Golden Boy Promotions** had filed a similar suit for $300 million in May.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. apologized on social media in July, not for anything he did but for the "childish behavior" of his associates, whom he didn't name. One candidate is **Adrien Broner**, who had just been sued by a woman whom Broner *did* name in a 2013 video, claiming she gave him crabs.

Former Mayweather victim Victor Ortiz was arrested in late July at a **Kenny Chesney** concert in Pasadena, California, after allegedly arguing with a man and then kicking him while he was down. Ortiz was charged with felony assault with a deadly weapon (his foot) and released on $30,000 bail. (Note: Ortiz appeared in "Southpaw" and leads with his right hand in real life but which foot he used is unknown.)

Victor should be more like **Cam Awesome**. The amateur heavyweight formerly known as Lenroy Thompson had just lost his semifinal bout to Cuban **Lenier Pero** at the Pan Am Games but didn't let negativity spoil his very entertaining post-fight interview on ESPN. Awesome said he kept himself going during the match by telling himself, "Cam, you look amazing" and remembering that "freedom beat communism." He then gave a brief Spanish lesson, neither confirmed nor denied that he was "the Taylor Swift of boxing," emphasized the importance of sit-ups and envisioned an alternate history where he could've used his speed to fight and work the judges' table simultaneously – in which case he would've given himself the win. As he himself told himself: "Cam, keep up the good work." RING

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BODY LANGUAGE

READING YOUR OPPONENT IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE BATTLE

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE RING is changing directions with Bernard Hopkins' "Perfect Execution" feature. Going forward, the future Hall of Famer will give his thoughts – through contributor Joseph Santoliquito – on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. That includes ring tactics, conduct outside the ropes and other elements of the sport on which Hopkins speaks with authority. This month: Body language.

Watch a fighter closely when he sits in his corner in between rounds. Believe it or not, I do. I'll sneak a peek to see if my opponent's shoulders are slumped forward, if his head is down, or looking anywhere but at me, and if his legs are stretched out straight. It tells me the sting in his punches will deflate fast.

It's just one small example of body language – one of the most underrated areas a fighter has to be aware of at all times. It tells you where your opponent is, and in turn, can tell you where you are in a fight.

You'll notice during the course of a fight, regardless of if I'm hurt or I'm tired, I'll mask that by my posture in the corner. I always sit the same, with my back straight up against the ring post, my head up looking and listening to what my corner is telling me or ahead at my opponent to see

Bernard Hopkins might look at Jean Pascal between rounds and see a tired or struggling opponent.

CANELO: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; PASCAL: ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

what his body language is telling me.

The signs of body language are as important to a seasoned fighter as speaking through your mouth. And, in time, being able to read body language can help make you a seasoned pro.

Picking up an opponent's body language does take time to master. Most young guys coming up are so preoccupied at what they're doing that they often lose track of what the guy in the other corner is doing.

Police officers, military guys, they're trained in some aspect of reading body language. Non-verbal communication tells you in the boxing game, in and out of the ring, if your opponent is really afraid of you.

I like to look at my opponent and try to read him anywhere I can. It could be at a press conference, obviously during a stare-down or at a weigh-in, anywhere you see your opponent. Watch his eyes, his head, and watch how he walks.

You scout the room, you scout your opponent, you scout his team. Are they paying attention to their guy or are they just happy to be there, making eye contact with some good-looking woman in the audience during a press conference? That tells me they may not believe in their guy. They're distracted, thinking about other things besides the fight.

The signs are there.

Reading body language is 50 percent of the 100 percent battle you have to put into fight preparation. Be aware. I lived off of body language on D Block, when I was in prison. I lived off of body language in the streets. And I transformed that mentality into the ring.

When I fought Jean Pascal, his overly brash cockiness told me he was in trouble. He was so full of himself that there was a way to exploit it. When Pascal is being pressured and forced to fight, he ducks his head and swings wildly at anything he can hit. We all have ring radar but that told me he was in a panic mode, swinging for the fences. I knew then my attack was effective. I knew I had him where I wanted him.

That's what his body language told me.

Floyd Mayweather is the master of body language. He saw in Canelo Alvarez's eyes when he hit him with that first jab it was going to be an easy night. Canelo couldn't react to anything Floyd did. Canelo began looking down. Floyd has a 100-percent offensive style when it comes to making an opponent commit themselves because they grow so frustrated trying to hit him. He gives them a rope, playing a magic trick.

When you think you're making progress, hitting Floyd's arms and shoulders, you're opened to be countered. It's what Floyd does so well. He doesn't do anything physically first. He discourages a guy early and that's it. It's why he's one of the greatest fighters of modern times. RING

Hopkins might see a more focused opponent if he were sitting opposite Canelo Alvarez.

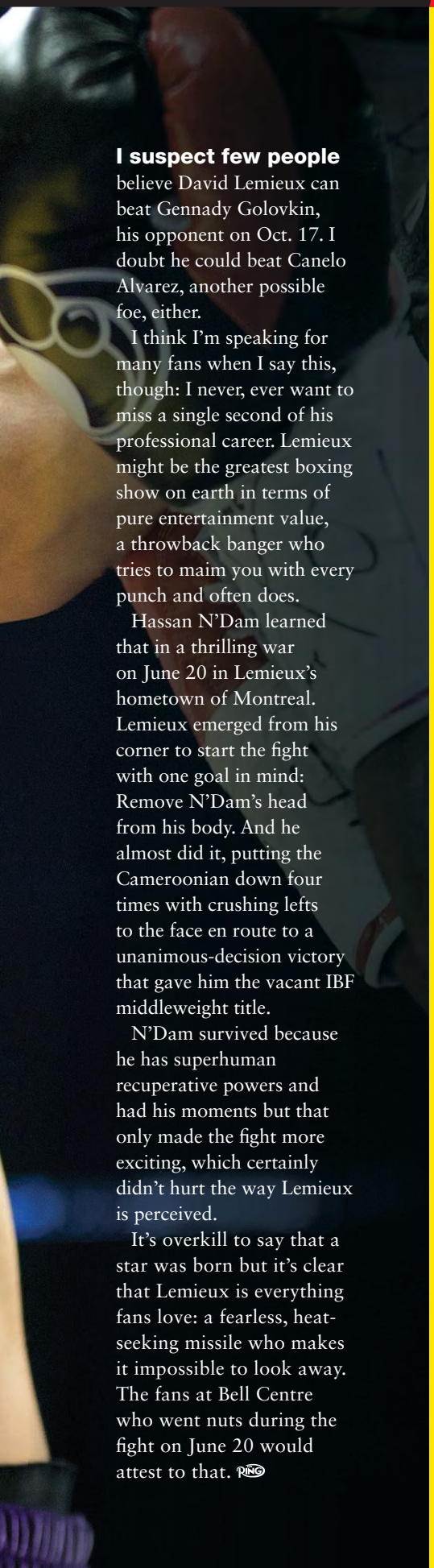
FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

DAVID LEMIEUX

By **Michael Rosenthal**

David Lemieux put on a riveting show against Hassan N'Dam.

PETER MCCABE/AP/GETTY IMAGES



I suspect few people believe David Lemieux can beat Gennady Golovkin, his opponent on Oct. 17. I doubt he could beat Canelo Alvarez, another possible foe, either.

I think I'm speaking for many fans when I say this, though: I never, ever want to miss a single second of his professional career. Lemieux might be the greatest boxing show on earth in terms of pure entertainment value, a throwback banger who tries to maim you with every punch and often does.

Hassan N'Dam learned that in a thrilling war on June 20 in Lemieux's hometown of Montreal. Lemieux emerged from his corner to start the fight with one goal in mind: Remove N'Dam's head from his body. And he almost did it, putting the Cameroonian down four times with crushing lefts to the face en route to a unanimous-decision victory that gave him the vacant IBF middleweight title.

N'Dam survived because he has superhuman recuperative powers and had his moments but that only made the fight more exciting, which certainly didn't hurt the way Lemieux is perceived.

It's overkill to say that a star was born but it's clear that Lemieux is everything fans love: a fearless, heat-seeking missile who makes it impossible to look away. The fans at Bell Centre who went nuts during the fight on June 20 would attest to that.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Nadjib Mohammedi (No. 9 last month) was the definition of "overmatched" in his third-round knockout loss to No. 1 Sergey Kovalev. He fell out of the ratings and was replaced by Cuban Yunieski Gonzalez, who fought valiantly but lost a narrow (and unpopular) decision against Jean Pascal (No. 3) on the Kovalev-Mohammedi card.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Arthur Abraham (No. 1) scored a sixth-round knockout to close out his quadrilogy with Robert Stieglitz (No. 4 at the time). Abraham held his position while Stieglitz dropped to No. 8.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: David Lemieux (No. 10 last month) rose to No. 4 after a four-knockdown UD over Hassan N'Dam, who fell from No. 4 to No. 8. Martin Murray (No. 5 last month) left the ratings to campaign at 168 pounds and Frenchman Michel Soro, fresh off of winning the European title, entered at No. 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Demetrius Andrade (No. 4 last month) was ejected for not fighting in over a year. The resulting adjustments made room for Ohioan Willie Nelson at No. 10. Floyd Mayweather Jr., who held RING championships at both 154 and 147 pounds, had not defended his junior middleweight championship for more than18 months. When it became clear that his next fight would be at welterweight, Mayweather was stripped.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Adrien Broner went from No. 4 to No. 5, switching with Terence Crawford, on the weakness of his unanimous-decision loss to Shawn Porter (No. 6 welterweight) at a 144-pound catchweight. Unbeaten New Yorker Amir Imam (No. 10 last month) iced Fernando Angulo (unrated) in the fourth round and rose to No. 9.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Mickey Bey (No. 3 last month) was demoted to No. 5 after choosing to vacate his IBF title rather than face mandatory challenger Denis Shafikov (No. 9).

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Andres Gutierrez (No. 6 last month) is fighting at featherweight so he was removed. After adjustments to fill the gap, the vacancy at No. 10 was filled by Mexico's Hugo Ruiz. Scott Quigg (No. 3 last month) and Carl Frampton (No. 1 last month) gave standout performances on the same night but Quigg's two-round blitz against Kiko Martinez (No. 9 bantamweight at the time) stood out just a bit more than Frampton's UD over Alejandro Gonzalez (unrated). The two Brits swapped places, leaving Leo Santa Cruz at No. 2.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Martinez (No. 9 last month) was removed after his title fight against Quigg at junior featherweight. Thus, Lee Haskins moved up a notch and Thai veteran Suriyan Sor Rungvisai came in at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: McJoe Arroyo beat Arthur Villanueva by technical decision after the two bumped heads. Arroyo picked up a title and went from No. 9 to No. 6 while Villanueva dropped from No. 6 to No. 10.

FLYWEIGHTS: Johnriel Casimero lost a decision against Amnat Ruenroeng (No. 2 at the time) and was replaced at No. 10 by undefeated Thai fighter Nawaphon Por Chokchai.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Felix Alvarado (No. 2 last month) has flirted with 108 pounds but has only officially fought there once in his past nine fights so he was dropped and Filipino Jonathan Taconing came in at No. 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Oswaldo Novoa moved up and fought Moises Fuentes at flyweight so he was replaced at No. 10 by Mexico's Jesus Silvestre.

Many believe that Yunieski Gonzalez (right) deserved the decision over Jean Pascal on July 25.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
532 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
406 • Russia • 29-1-0 (21 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
88 • U.S. • 34-0-0 (33 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
180 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
198 • Bulgaria • 20-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
71 • U.S. • 19-1-0 (10 KOs)

6. BERMANE STIVERNE
118 • Canada • 24-2-1 (21 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
74 • Ukraine • 20-0-1 (12 KOs)

8. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
38 • Uzbek. • 34-2-1 (21 KOs)

9. TONY THOMPSON
20 • U.S. • 40-5-0 (27 KOs)

10. CARLOS TAKAM
10 • Cameroon • 32-2-1 (25 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
200 • Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. MARCO HUCK
177 • Germany • 38-2-1 (26 KOs)

2. GRIGORY DROZD
95 • Russia • 40-1-0 (28 KOs)

3. DENIS LEBEDEV
287 • Russia • 27-2-0 (20 KOs)

4. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
529 • Poland • 49-3-1 (35 KOs)

5. ILUNGA MAKABU
107 • Congo • 19-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. FIRAT ARSLAN
143 • Germany • 35-8-2 (21 KOs)

7. VICTOR RAMIREZ
16 • Argentina • 22-2-0 (17 KOs)

8. YOURI KALENGA
58 • Congo • 21-2-0 (14 KOs)

9. DMITRY KUDRYASHOV
16 • Russia • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)

10. THABISO MCHUNU
93 • S. Africa • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
112 • Canada • 26-1-0 (21 KOs)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
132 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)

2. BERNARD HOPKINS
478 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

3. JEAN PASCAL
107 • Canada • 30-3-1 (17 KOs)

4. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
161 • Germany • 46-2-0 (34 KOs)

5. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
72 • Colombia • 17-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
170 • Malawi • 24-2-2 (10 KOs)

7. ARTUR BETERBIEV
33 • Russia • 9-0-0 (9 KOs)

8. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
63 • Poland • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

9. YUNIESKI GONZALEZ
1 • Cuba • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)

10. THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN
17 • S. Africa • 25-0-2 (14 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
303 • Armenia • 43-4-0 (29 KOs)

2. JAMES DEGALE
112 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
190 • U.K. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
55 • Mexico • 32-0-0 (24 KOs)

5. ANDRE DIRRELL
48 • U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

6. BADOU JACK
14 • Sweden • 19-1-1 (12 KOs)

7. ANTHONY DIRRELL
50 • U.S. • 27-1-1 (22 KOs)

8. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
311 • Russia • 47-5-1 (27 KOs)

9. FEDOR CHUDINOV
12 • Russia • 13-0-0 (10 KOs)

10. CALLUM SMITH
8 • U.K. • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)

NAOKI FUKUDA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C MIGUEL COTTO
60 • P.R. • 40-4-0 (33 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
190 • Kaz. • 33-0-0 (30 KOs)

2. ANDY LEE
33 • Ireland • 34-2-1 (24 KOs)

3. PETER QUILLIN
165 • U.S. • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

4. DAVID LEMIEUX
9 • Canada • 34-2-0 (31 KOs)

5. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
35 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)

6. DANIEL JACOBS
33 • U.S. • 29-1-0 (26 KOs)

7. HASSAN N'DAM
80 • Cameroon • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. DANIEL GEALE
320 • Australia • 31-4-0 (16 KOs)

9. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
16 • U.K. • 19-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. MICHEL SORO
5 • France • 27-1-1 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. CANELO ALVAREZ
246 • Mexico • 45-1-1 (32 KOs)

2. ERISLANDY LARA
213 • Cuba • 21-2-2 (12 KOs)

3. AUSTIN TROUT
165 • U.S. • 29-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. JERMELL CHARLO
90 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. VANES MARTIROSYAN
295 • U.S. • 35-2-1 (21 KOs)

6. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
42 • U.S. • 34-5-0 (19 KOs)

7. JERMALL CHARLO
59 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. JULIAN WILLIAMS
33 • U.S. • 20-0-1 (12 KOs)

9. CARLOS MOLINA
213 • Mexico • 22-6-2 (6 KOs)

10. WILLIE NELSON
1 • U.S. • 24-2-1 (14 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
202 • U.S. • 48-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. KELL BROOK
223 • U.K. • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)

2. MANNY PACQUIAO
299 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
65 • U.K. • 31-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
163 • U.S. • 32-1-1 (12 KOs)

5. KEITH THURMAN
125 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (22 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
86 • U.S. • 26-1-1 (16 KOs)

7. MARCOS MAIDANA
85 • Argentina • 35-5-0 (31 KOs)

8. DIEGO CHAVES
33 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

9. SADAM ALI
11 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

10. BRAD SOLOMON
8 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (9 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C DANNY GARCIA
225 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
225 • Argentina • 37-3-0 (34 KOs)

2. LAMONT PETERSON
127 • U.S. • 33-3-1 (17 KOs)

3. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
138 • Russia • 24-4-0 (17 KOs)

4. TERENCE CRAWFORD
15 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (18 KOs)

5. ADRIEN BRONER
65 • U.S. • 30-2-0 (22 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
68 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (9 KOs)

7. VIKTOR POSTOL
102 • Ukraine • 27-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. MAURICIO HERRERA
27 • U.S. • 22-5-0 (7 KOs)

9. AMIR IMAM
11 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. JOSE BENAVIDEZ
16 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. RICHAR ABRIL
45 • Cuba • 19-3-1 (8 KOs)

2. JORGE LINARES
73 • Venezuela • 39-3-0 (26 KOs)

3. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
260 • Mexico • 35-4-0 (13 KOs)

4. SHARIF BOGERE
39 • Uganda • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

5. MICKEY BEY
46 • U.S. • 21-1-1 (10 KOs)

6. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
16 • Montenegro • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. DIERRY JEAN
35 • Canada • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)

8. KEVIN MITCHELL
26 • U.K. • 39-3-0 (29 KOs)

9. DENIS SHAFIKOV
16 • Russia • 36-1-1 (20 KOs)

10. RICHARD COMMEY
9 • Ghana • 22-0-0 (20 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
290 • Japan • 23-0-1 (19 KOs)

2. TAKASHI MIURA
121 • Japan • 29-2-2 (22 KOs)

3. ROMAN MARTINEZ
360 • P.R. • 29-2-2 (17 KOs)

4. FRANCISCO VARGAS
55 • Mexico • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

5. JAVIER FORTUNA
39 • Dom. Rep. • 28-0-1 (20 KOs)

6. JOSE PEDRAZA
28 • P.R. • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)

7. BRYAN VASQUEZ
33 • Costa Rica • 34-2-0 (18 KOs)

8. ORLANDO SALIDO
45 • Mexico • 42-13 -2 (29 KOs)

9. ROMAIN JACOB
12 • France • 23-0-0 (7 KOs)

10. RIKKI NAITO
11 • Japan • 13-0-0 (5 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NICHOLAS WALTERS
138 • Jamaica • 26-0-0 (21 KOs)

2. VASYL LOMACHENKO
65 • Ukraine • 4-1-0 (2 KO)

3. GARY RUSSELL JR.
18 • U.S. • 26-1-0 (15 KOs)

4. ABNER MARES
117 • Mexico • 29-1-1 (15 KOs)

5. LEE SELBY
72 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (8 KOs)

6. JHONNY GONZALEZ
226 • Mexico • 57-9-0 (48 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
86 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. EVGENY GRADOVICH
126 • Russia • 19-1-1 (9 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
42 • Argentina • 27-1-0 (21 KOs)

10. JAYSON VELEZ
35 • P.R. • 23-0-1 (16 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
247 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. SCOTT QUIGG
140 • U.K. • 31-0-2 (23 KOs)

2. LEO SANTA CRUZ
117 • U.S. • 30-0-1 (17 KOs)

3. CARL FRAMPTON
149 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

4. NONITO DONAIRE
18 • Phil. • 35-3-0 (23 KOs)

5. GENESIS SERVANIA
72 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

6. SHINGO WAKE
36 • Japan • 19-4-2 (11 KOs)

7. REY VARGAS
33 • Mexico • 24-0-0 (20 KOs)

8. ALBERT PAGARA
30 • Phil. • 23-0-0 (16 KOs)

9. JESSIE MAGDALENO
7 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. HUGO RUIZ
3 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (31 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
195 • Japan • 23-0-2 (17 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
44 • Dom. Rep. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
383 • Panama • 35-3-1 (12 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
241 • Japan • 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
5. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
117 • U.K. • 26-2-1 (12 KOs)
6. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
104 • Japan • 31-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
236 • Phil. • 35-3-3 (20 KOs)
8. **RANDY CABALLERO**
40 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
9. **LEE HASKINS**
7 • U.K. • 32-3-0 (14 KOs)
10. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
2 • Thailand • 44-6-1 (22 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
30 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
168 • Mexico • 32-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
117 • Thailand • 35-4-1 (32 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
87 • S. Africa • 20-3-0 (17 KOs)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
273 • Argentina • 43-2-2 (23 KOs)
6. **MCJOE ARROYO**
59 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (8 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
148 • Thailand • 56-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
114 • Mexico • 30-3-0 (25 KOs)
9. **DAVID SANCHEZ**
24 • Mexico • 28-2-2 (22 KOs)
10. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
119 • Phil. • 27-1-0 (14 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
90 • Nicaragua • 43-0-0 (37 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
121 • Mexico • 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
2. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
64 • Thailand • 16-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
212 • U.S. • 36-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **KAZUTO IOKA**
45 • Japan • 17-1-0 (10 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
200 • Argentina • 35-2-0 (19 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
72 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **EDGAR SOSA**
168 • Mexico • 51-9-0 (30 KOs)
8. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
91 • Mexico • 32-4-1 (28 KOs)
9. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
47 • P.R. • 16-2-0 (14 KOs)
10. **NAWAPHON POR CHOKCHAI**
5 • Thailand • 29-0-0 (22 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
199 • Phil. • 36-1-4 (21 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
122 • Mexico • 26-1-1 (17 KOs)
2. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
33 • Japan • 22-2-1 (9 KOs)
3. **JAVIER MENDOZA**
16 • Mexico • 24-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
64 • Phil. • 23-1-1 (18 KOs)
5. **RAUL GARCIA**
30 • Mexico • 36-3-1 (22 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
37 • Phil. • 32-2-0 (12 KOs)
7. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
118 • Peru • 33-9-0 (13 KOs)
8. **REY LORETO**
16 • Phil. • 20-13-0 (12 KOs)
9. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
9 • Mexico • 17-3-1 (11 KOs)
10. **JONATHAN TACONING**
1 • Phil. • 21-2-1 (18 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
149 • S. Africa • 28-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
122 • Japan • 29-7-0 (11 KOs)
3. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
215 • Thailand • 38-0-0 (13 KOs)
4. **KOSEI TANAKA**
39 • Japan • 5-0-0 (2 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
43 • Thailand • 11-0-0 (6 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
146 • Nicaragua • 28-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **RYUJI HARA**
100 • Japan • 19-1-0 (11 KOs)
8. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
37 • China • 25-6-1 (14 KOs)
9. **DENVER CUELLO**
37 • Phil. • 36-5-6 (24 KOs)
10. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
1 • Mexico • 30-6-0 (22 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
202 • U.S. • 48-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
60 • Nicaragua • 43-0-0 (37 KOs)
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
260 • Ukraine • 64-3-0 (53 KOs)
4. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
24 • Kaz. • 33-0-0 (30 KOs)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
101 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
609 • Phil. • 57-6-2 (38 KOs)
7. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
20 • Russia • 28-0-1 (25 KOs)
8. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
13 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
11 • Japan • 23-0-2 (17 KOs)
10. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
8 • Japan • 23-0-1 (19 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	35	↓ 1
●	MEXICO	21	
●	UNITED KINGDOM	14	↓ 1
●	JAPAN	13	
●	PHILIPPINES	12	
●	RUSSIA	11	
●	ARGENTINA	7	
●	THAILAND	7	↑ 2
●	PUERTO RICO	6	
●	SOUTH AFRICA	6	
●	CANADA	5	
●	CUBA	5	↑ 1
●	UKRAINE	4	
●	GERMANY	3	
●	CAMEROON	2	
●	CONGO	2	
●	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
●	FRANCE	2	
●	NICARAGUA	3	↓ 1
●	POLAND	2	
	ARMENIA	1	
	AUSTRALIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CHINA	1	
	COLOMBIA	1	
	COSTA RICA	1	
	GHANA	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	JAMAICA	1	
	KAZAKHSTAN	1	
	MALAWI	1	
	MONTENEGRO	1	
	PANAMA	1	
	PERU	1	
	SWEDEN	1	
	UGANDA	1	
	UZBEKISTAN	1	
	VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *None.*

Countries in: *Ghana.*

NAOKI FUKUDA

JAPAN VS. PHILIPPINES VS. THAILAND

Thailand picked up two more fighters in the ratings this month, bantamweight Suriyan Sor Rungvisai and flyweight Nawaphon Por Chokchai. That allowed Thailand to creep up just a bit on powerful Asian rivals Japan and the Philippines. Here's a look at the numbers:

DIVISION	JAPAN	PHIL.	THAI.
HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	0	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	0	1	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	0	0	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	0	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	0	0
FEATHERWEIGHTS	0	0	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	3	0
BANTAMWEIGHTS	3	1	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	1	1	2
FLYWEIGHTS	1	0	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	1	5	0
STRAWWEIGHTS	3	1	2
TOTAL	13	12	7

DIVISION DOMINANCE

The U.S. has the most fighters in THE RING Ratings. It also has the most rated fighters in the most divisions. That includes eight fighters in the junior welterweight division. Here's the breakdown:

8 U.S. JR. WELTERWEIGHT

7 U.S. JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT

6 U.S. WELTERWEIGHT

5 PHILIPPINES JR. FLYWEIGHT

3 JAPAN JR. LIGHTWEIGHT

3 JAPAN BANTAMWEIGHT

3 JAPAN STRAWWEIGHT

3 MEXICO JR. BANTAMWEIGHT

3 MEXICO FLYWEIGHT

3 PHILIPPINES JR. FEATHERWEIGHT

3 RUSSIA CRUISERWEIGHT

3 U.K. SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

3 U.S. HEAVYWEIGHT

2 MEXICO FEATHERWEIGHT

2 RUSSIA/CANADA LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

2 U.S./U.K. MIDDLEWEIGHT

1 10 NATIONS LIGHTWEIGHT

FOCUS ON . . .

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 154-pounders.

Cornelius Bundrage, 42, is one of THE RING's oldest rated fighters.

MOST WEEKS RATED: VANES MARTIROSYAN **295**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: WILLIE NELSON **1**

OLDEST: CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE **42**

YOUNGEST: CANELO ALVAREZ **25**

MOST FIGHTS: ALVAREZ **47**

FEWEST FIGHTS: JERMALL CHARLO, JULIAN WILLIAMS **21**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: JERMELL CHARLO, JERMALL CHARLO **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: CARLOS MOLINA **73.3 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: ALVAREZ **32**

FEWEST KOS: MOLINA **6**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: JERMELL CHARLO **26 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: BUNDRAGE **(IBF)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): RAMON ALVAREZ, JACK CULCAY, JAMES KIRKLAND, SERGEY RABCHENKO, LIAM SMITH

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Floyd Mayweather Jr.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

MAYWEATHER: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES FOR SPIKE TV;BUNDRAGE: MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

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ALWAYS IN CONTROL

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. KNEW HOW TO USE HIS SUCCESS AND RICHES TO GET HIS WAY

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Only Floyd Mayweather Jr. knows exactly when and how he'll retire. Maybe it'll happen on Sept 12. Maybe he'll answer his final bell at a new Las Vegas arena scheduled to open in the spring. Maybe, maybe, maybe. Mayweather always controls the maybes, or at least as many of them as he can.

Whatever the timing, it's the control that seems to define him in a career carefully orchestrated to minimize the risk and maximize the profit. It's a cliche but that's the bottom line to a Mayweather era controversial for a reckless lifestyle

AP

MAYWEATHER VS. BERTO *Floyd Mayweather Jr. announced on Aug. 4 – the day this issue of THE RING Magazine went to press – that his opponent on Sept. 12 would be Andre Berto, as had been rumored for weeks. The fight will be televised on Showtime Pay-Per-View.*

outside the ropes and a conservative approach within them.

From the ringside's limited perspective, the boxer will be debated, ad nauseam, by the record of who he fought and when, by who he didn't fight and why. As a person, he's judged for his record of domestic violence.

In the end, however, he might not be remembered much for the boxing or the behavior. Mayweather, whose bragging can make Donald Trump sound humble, loves to call himself The Best Ever. In history's mirror,

Every move Floyd Mayweather Jr. makes is intended to maximize profits.

he sees no rivals. Not Sugar Ray Robinson. Not Muhammad Ali. He sees only himself, TBE, an acronym his critics don't buy. But as a fashion statement, it works. On T-shirts and caps, it sells.

The shrewd businessman in Mayweather has always found a way to turn criticism into free advertising. He knows how to make a buck. The Best Ever at it, in fact. Boxing just happens to be the commodity for this businessman with a great right counter and a better sales pitch. His reported $240-million payday for a unanimous decision over Manny Pacquiao in a disappointing fight on May 2 set a record for annual income among athletes and pushed his estimated net worth to $650 million, according to various sources.

For one year, he made more than LeBron James and Tiger Woods and the New York Yankees. All of the Yankees, not just Alex Rodriguez. The Yankees' 2015 payroll is $219,282,196, according to the Associated Press. Among MLB's 30 teams, only the Los Angeles Dodgers payroll ($272,789,040) is higher than Mayweather's final purse for 12 rounds of work.

Mayweather's income, a Gross Domestic Product-like number, has vaulted him out of the sports world altogether. With his toy chest full of personal jets, Ferraris and Bugattis, he now travels comfortably among the one percent.

Maybe that's why Andre Berto was selected to be Mayweather's opponent at the MGM Grand in the final bout of his six-fight deal with Showtime. Berto represents a foe more overmatched than any of the previous five. His losses, three out of his last six fights, include a devastating defeat at the hands of Robert Guerrero, whom Mayweather beat easily in his first Showtime bout. In choosing Berto, it's as if Mayweather is saying he has already proven himself. He talks about legacy but there's a sense that he defines the legacy more by the money than the opponent or the record.

"I don't really think I'll miss the sport," Mayweather said after showing off a $100-million check to ringside reporters in the immediate aftermath of his decision over Pacquiao. "I don't even watch boxing.

"At one particular time, I loved the sport of boxing. I wanted to go to every fight and wanted to be at every boxing event. But I just lost the love for the sport."

If passion for a craft that made him unimaginably wealthy is gone, then why continue at all? It's just the latest controversy in Mayweather's turbulent career.

Even Floyd Sr., his father and trainer, wonders why his son would continue when he doesn't need the money and doesn't have any more motivation.

"Floyd told me he just wants to get a couple of easy fights," his dad told MLive in June. "My honest opinion, if he feels that way, he should get on out of the game."

Mayweather Sr.'s comments suggest what a lot of people suspect. Two more fights would mean first Berto and then a 50th fight for a shot at 50-0 sometime next year, presumably at the 20,000-seat arena, an MGM Grand-AEG Live project, under construction on a lot between New York-New York and Monte Carlo near The Strip.

But his father has also been around boxing's ever-shifting alliances and loyalties long enough to know that cheap shots rule the business. Scar tissue is the only entitlement. Berto appears to be hopelessly in over his head. Mayweather's son has a better chance at getting knocked down by a runaway float during a retirement parade than he would at getting knocked out by a lucky punch from Berto. But lucky punches do happen, sometimes at the craziest times. So, too, do controversial scorecards.

"The analysts, everybody, they don't like Floyd," the senior Mayweather said. "When it goes like this, it's just a matter of time. They're looking for the next guy."

RING MAGAZINE

Frustration mounts, in part because of the letdown over Mayweather's decision over Pacquiao. Pacquiao said post-fight that he fought with a bad shoulder. He underwent surgery to have it repaired during the week after the bout.

There have been plenty of questions surrounding the injury – when it happened, its severity, how and when it was disclosed. Despite all of that, Mayweather never was close to punctuating the bout with a knockout. He never even seemed to pursue one.

Many in a record-setting pay-per-view audience of more than 4.4 million spent $100 on the high-definition telecast yet never got any drama. A fight-stopping blow is often

Mayweather said he has lost his love for the sport even amid adulation.

BEST OPTIONS

The majority of experts seemed to believe that these five fighters were the most worthy among candidates to fight Mayweather on Sept. 12.

AMIR KHAN

Khan didn't look great against Chris Algieri in his last fight but his speed and skills make him a threat to Mayweather. He has won five in a row.

KEITH THURMAN

The unbeaten Thurman has the athleticism and power to give anyone trouble, although he looked so-so against Luis Collazo in July.

KELL BROOK

The Briton might have what it takes to give Mayweather more problems than any other 147-pounder but he doesn't have the name recognition.

TIM BRADLEY

No welterweight is more qualified to fight Mayweather than this talented, tested veteran but promotional conflicts make it impossible.

GENNADY GOLOVKIN

Mayweather would never take the risk of fighting the bigger (better?) GGG but it's the matchup the fans want most.

a gamble. Mayweather, who likes to show off his winning wagers on the internet, never took the risk.

Then there was news he would fight Berto instead or Amir Khan or Keith Thurman. Even fringe contender Karim Mayfield was mentioned as more likely than Khan and Thurman. Amid the reports, there were hints that maybe it would be offered on free TV, CBS. The theory was that it would ease the anger at having to pay so much for so little in May. In time, however, it became clear that the network couldn't sell enough advertising to cover Mayweather's $32-million minimum. Again, it always comes back to the money.

As if to further inflame disaffected customers, the sudden mention of Berto looked like a gimme in Mayweather's bid to equal Rocky Marciano, who retired at 49-0. Marciano's career earnings totaled $1.7 million, the equivalent of about $8.8 million in today's dollars, but his record is the acknowledged milestone, still the legacy-defining mark.

Whoever Mayweather ended up choosing, he and his Showtime promoters will sell the fight as history. But let's look at the history. Marciano won his 49th and final fight in 1955 with a ninth-round stoppage of Archie Moore at old Yankee Stadium. Moore, who knocked down Marciano in the second round, is one of those legends still on all-time pound-for-pound lists that, safe to say, will never include Berto.

"I think he's bad for boxing," said Khan, a popular U.K. welterweight whom Mayweather bypassed twice for Marcos Maidana. "I've always asked: Why finish your career on a low note? People want to see him finish his career on a high, fighting guys people want to see him fight.

"The fans all want to see him

fight Amir Khan. Does he really want to end his career by fighting someone he's going to beat and beat convincingly?"

Yeah, he does and his bank account says he can.

"Floyd against Berto, it's a terrible fight," Hall of Fame lightweight and emerging ringside analyst Ray Mancini said. "Berto is a warrior but he's got no chance. But it's boxing. The deal in boxing is to get the most money for the easiest fight. I get it.

"At 38, I'm not sure I would have wanted to fight the toughest guy out there. Floyd is a special talent. If he beats Gennady Golovkin, then, hey, I'll say he's Top 10 all-time."

President Trump is more likely than Mayweather-Golovkin.

Weight is a reason. Golovkin is a true middleweight. Mayweather, a classic welterweight, has never been heavier than junior middle.

But Mayweather's history tells us that he won't fight Golovkin simply because it's not worth the risk. Mayweather can get his $32-million guarantee with little chance of defeat or punishment.

Antonio Margarito is an example of how Mayweather pursued his career. Margarito had none of Golovkin's skill but he was bone-crunching tough, as tough as any welterweight or junior-middleweight in history. There was also evidence of him using altered gloves, which were discovered before his 2009 loss to Shane Mosley and were alleged in his 2008 upset of Miguel Cotto.

Mayweather avoided him, almost as if he instinctively knew what the cost might be. He could beat him. Probably would have, but at a punishing price that might've ended his career before he was able to become history's highest-earning athlete.

"Punishment ain't cool," Mayweather has said often enough for it to become a refrain.

There was plenty of public ridicule for the way he ducked Margarito. It also was an element in his split with Top Rank and Bob Arum. Above all, it was a time when he assumed control of his career. Perhaps it's as simple as styles making fights. Whatever it is, Mayweather has a matchmaker's instinct. He knows who to fight and when to fight them.

He'll probably be remembered for gaining major stardom and all of its prerogatives with his split decision over Oscar De La Hoya in May 2007, at a moment when De La

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather has a knack for knowing who to fight and when to fight them. Manny Pacquiao, for example.

Hoya was five years beyond a prime that included his brilliant victory over Fernando Vargas.

Then he'll probably be remembered for beating a faded and injured Manny Pacquiao five years after a deal for their first fight fell apart because of a drug-testing controversy.

In the ring, Mayweather was at his best as a junior lightweight. It was then, perhaps, that he still loved the sport that would become a business. He won his first 130-pound title in 1998 in an eight-round stoppage of the late Genaro Hernandez.

His hand speed, power and jackrabbit-like footwork were probably never more evident than in 2001, when risk was not an apparent consideration in scoring an incredible five knockdowns in a 10th-round stoppage of dangerous Diego Corrales.

At 135 pounds, he was every bit the sensation he was at 130, especially in two bouts in 2002 against Jose Luis Castillo, one of the best lightweights of the time. Mayweather won both by decision. The first was debatable. Mayweather won a unanimous decision on the official cards but HBO's Harold Lederman had 115-111 for Castillo.

After perhaps the closest call in his career, Mayweather said he fought with a torn rotator cuff in his left shoulder. Thirteen years later, Pacquiao would disclose the same injury in the opposite shoulder after losing to Mayweather in a fight unprecedented for the hype it generated.

Along the way, Mayweather won titles in three more weight classes – junior welter, welter and junior middle – while developing a keen eye for detail and a further grasp on how to manage all the levers that control a career.

Just about everybody, including a potential opponent, is an employee. Khan didn't get the job because he couldn't keep his mouth shut, according to sources and media reports.

Khan learned what boxing might remember most about Mayweather: Money means power, control. It's a commodity that Mayweather has been The Best Ever at collecting and using.

MEMORIES OF MAYWEATHER

20 WRITERS REVEAL WHAT THEY'LL REMEMBER MOST ABOUT 'MONEY'

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has said his fight on Sept. 12 will be his last.

Raise your hand if you believe him. OK, no hands. We get it. We'll also see. I would be very surprised if Mayweather actually retired after this fight but it's not out of the question; he does things his way.

And it really doesn't matter for the purposes of this feature. Mayweather, 38, is certainly a few fights from the end of his remarkable career.

With that in mind, we asked some of the best boxing writers in the world to tell you what they'll remember most about Mayweather. Here's what they said.

RON BORGES
Boston Herald

If this is Mayweather's final moment, I'll remember two things. First, the way he fought back vs. Emanuel Burton when he was rudely challenged for the first time as a young pro. He convinced me that day that while he might not want to be in a fight, if one breaks out, he'll fight back. Second, despite all the chaos so often surrounding him, when it came to his craft, he was a professional. Always prepared, always in shape and always respectful of the gifts he'd been blessed with. He never let success, money or ego blind him to the demands of his sport or convince him there was a shortcut to success in boxing.

GARETH DAVIES
The (London) Telegraph

The reflexes and timing of his counters, the footwork and ring generalship Floyd Mayweather showed when you watched him live. You only get one chance to watch a fight live, when you're sitting there. And I always found my pen on the desk until the minute between rounds. He has always been a mesmerizing talent. For all his faults, up close and personal he possessed a magnetic charisma. And a final thought – money, money, money maker.

JAKE DONOVAN
BoxingScene.com

Mayweather has been accused of protecting his "0" by cherry-picking opposition. I contend that he protects it by always implementing the perfect fight plan in the ring, no matter the opponent. Even more impressive is that he's done so while fighting the best or among the best for the past 17 years.

BILL DWYRE
Los Angeles Times

It was before the Carlos Baldomir fight, years ago, before Mayweather was Mayweather. I had been given special access the week of the fight. He checked into the hotel suite they had given him at Mandalay Bay. It was one of those high-roller places. Probably seven rooms and 4,000 square feet. All the amenities. Everything shiny and new. Even then he was worth millions. He saw the place and went from room to room like a kid in a candy shop.

DOUG FISCHER
RINGTV.COM

I will remember the amazing talent and promise of a young "Pretty Boy Floyd" coming out of the 1996 Olympics and retiring an excellent veteran in Genaro Hernandez within two years of his pro career. I will also remember the frustration and tedium of the "Money" era and his stranglehold on the sport.

NORM FRAUENHEIM
THE RING

No fight defines Floyd Mayweather. Character-revealing adversity is absent in that "0." But there was Larry Merchant after a KO of Victor Ortiz. An emotional Mayweather wanted Merchant fired. He nearly lost control in a volatile exchange that exposed how desperate he is to control everything. For the most part, he has. It's why he's unbeaten.

THOMAS GERBASI
THE RING

When a young Floyd Mayweather would stand in front of an opponent, make him miss and then make him pay, it was as pure an endorsement for the sweet science as there ever was. Whether he's remembered for that or for his out-of-the-ring antics remains to be seen.

DAVID GREISMAN
THE RING

I'll most remember Mayweather's composure in difficult moments, whether it was fighters trying to pummel him against the ropes, remaining calm during the Zab Judah riot or recovering after he was badly hurt against Shane Mosley. The cheap shot against

Victor Ortiz (which is also Ortiz and Joe Cortez's fault) is the exception, I guess.

LEE GROVES
CompuBox/author

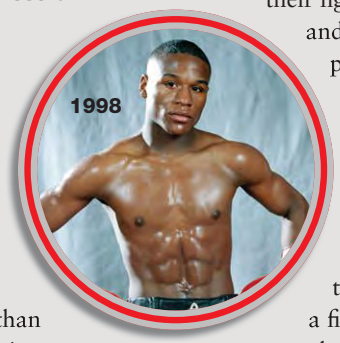
I'll remember his brilliant in-ring talent, his ambitious early-career leaps and his masterful brand-building. But I'll also recall his choice of opponents between 2004 and 2009. He could have crafted a complete, inarguable legacy but he chose a more prudent path. Because of that, there's a souring "what might have been" element.

BRIAN HARTY
THE RING

Floyd was elegant. What got me the first time I saw him fight was the relaxation and precision in the midst of battle. What I'll most remember, though, is a man-child who always put business first. I'll miss the missed opportunities to see his true potential. I won't miss "Money."

KEITH IDEC
The (Bergen County, N.J.) Record

What I'll remember most about Floyd Mayweather Jr. was how he transformed the firm belief he had in what his career could become into reality. However you feel about the polarizing superstar, Mayweather made more than $200 million for one fight in an era when boxing has been relegated to a niche sport.



KEVIN IOLE
Yahoo! Sports

Mayweather's mastery of the ring, even as a fresh-faced 21-year-old, was incredible to see and impossible to forget. He was almost always at least three steps ahead of his opponent.

STEVE KIM
BoxingScene.com

What I'll remember most about Mayweather was that he was a gifted fighter but an even better manager and matchmaker. Early on he flashed sublime skills at 130 but over time his acumen in avoiding certain fighters until the time was just right was uncanny.

MARK KRIEGEL
Journalist/author

Mayweather had a subtle, defensive style in an age that valued neither subtlety nor defense. He prospered despite the limited attention spans of a generation weaned on MMA, Xbox, YouTube and porn. A brilliant fighter but his real brilliance lay in the most lucrative persona in the history of sports.

GORDON MARINO
Wall Street Journal

I will remember Mayweather for his uncanny vision and boxing IQ. Whether it be Mosley, Alvarez or Pacquiao, he would take a few of the early rounds and let his opponents wing their shots. Then he would discern and process what was on their fighting hard-drive and come up with the program to disarm and beat them.

ROBERT MORALES
Los Angeles Daily News

Mayweather's ability to stand in front of a fighter and slip one punch after another is unforgettable. As for one particular fight, I remember being impressed with how Mayweather dealt with the frenzy that was his fight against Ricky Hatton. It was rough and dirty and Mayweather survived it by knocking Hatton's head into the post, stopping him shortly thereafter in the 10th.

GARY POOLE
Journalist/author

It's astounding that no one could ever figure out how to really challenge the kid from Grand Rapids. I sat ringside at many of his bouts, which were tedious masterpieces. It was simple really: Mayweather hits people a lot and rarely gets hit. His fights blur together – a shoulder roll, a quick shuffle, the creation of perfect defensive angles. Push REWIND 48 times. Mayweather was always a winner. It's strange that I will best remember Mayweather for one of his rare KOs: the time Victor Ortiz head-butted him and tried to hug him and then apologized by touching gloves. Floyd sneakily paused and knocked out Ortiz with a borderline sucker-punch. It was cold. It was calculating. And it was all Mayweather.

JOSEPH SANTOLIQUITO
THE RING

What I'll most remember about Mayweather is his ability to make opponents miss standing within inches of them and actually make that skill marketable. In an age when action sells, through the burgeoning MMA and with the popularity of fighters like Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward, Mayweather's otherworldly quickness somehow was able to capture the attention of the masses.

DON STRADLEY
THE RING

I'll remember Mayweather for being in the right place at the right time. Had there been some exciting American heavyweights around, Mayweather wouldn't have become the top draw in the business. Yet I admired his discipline and mental toughness. The guy was untouchable in the ring.

MARK WHICKER
Los Angeles Daily News

Mayweather confused and immobilized some of the best fighters of his time, in several different weight classes, by his defense alone. And he always delivered. He brought class and craft to the sport, if nowhere else.

THE ORIGINAL 49-0

ROCKY MARCIANO RETIRED WITH THE MARK **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** WILL BE CHASING WHEN HE FIGHTS **ON SEPT. 12**

By **Don Stradley**

Floyd Mayweather Jr. will run his record to 49-0 if he wins on Sept. 12.

RING MAGAZINE; INSET: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Rocky Marciano is one of the few prominent fighters to retire undefeated.

Only a government sting operation could've been carried out with more secrecy than Rocky Marciano's aborted comeback in 1959. Sweden's Ingemar Johannson had just KO'd Floyd Patterson, the fighter who'd claimed the heavyweight championship after Marciano's retirement in 1956. According to trainer Lou Duva, various parties had offered Marciano more than a million dollars to return and challenge Johannson. Duva recently told THE RING that he'd worked in secret with Marciano for several weeks. Marciano, Duva felt, looked good enough to regain the title.

"Rocky was always in pretty good shape," Duva said. "He was the kind of guy who would say, 'Come on, let's go for a run.' He wasn't worried about anybody. None of the guys around at that time would've given him any trouble. Being away from boxing for a few years wouldn't have made any difference."

Unfortunately, Marciano didn't get a chance to be the first man to regain the heavyweight crown.

"They tried to make the match," Duva said, "but it fell apart. Patterson's manager claimed Patterson had a rematch clause, or something like that. Rocky was upset when it didn't happen because of the money. He was always after the money. He wanted the championship, too."

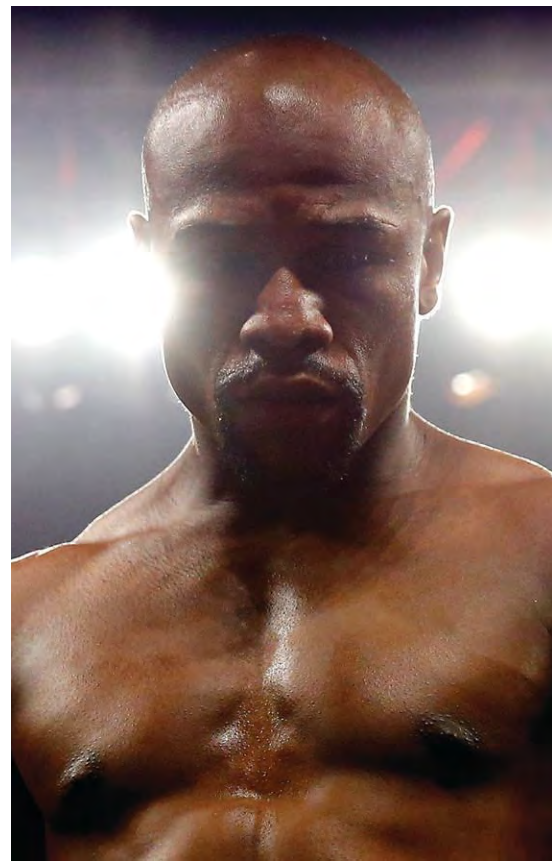
Marciano had stunned sportswriters with his sudden retirement in 1956. He was still young and looked strong as an ox but myriad issues were piling up, including a creaky back and managerial problems. Also, Marciano had grown deathly tired of the business. His professional career had lasted only eight years but he'd crammed 49 bouts into it, some of

them spectacularly violent. He'd been dropped in his last fight, sent to the canvas by old Archie Moore, no less. Marciano rose to his feet and retained his title by KO but enough was enough. Marciano said at the time that "barring poverty, the ring has seen the last of me. I am comfortably fixed and I am not afraid of the future."

His retirement plan was simple. He would take his perfect record on the road. He'd make personal appearances, pick up some money refereeing. Maybe he'd do some television work or set up a business somewhere. Why keep getting whacked in the head? Joe Louis hung around too long and it was actually Marciano who had sent "The Brown Bomber" into retirement, knocking Louis through the ropes at Madison Square Garden.Marciano wouldn't subject himself to the same humiliation.

There'd been talk of a 50th fight but the new contenders of the day had no marquee value. Nino Valdez? Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson? Eddy Machen? Mike DeJohn? None were ready for the big time. Marciano knew how to work the press so he told a sweet story about quitting to stay home with his wife and baby. Yet retirement saw him bounce around the country, enjoying the pleasures he'd denied himself while boxing.

Marciano had never been entirely in love with boxing in the first place. Baseball had been his first love. He looked at boxing as a kind of experiment. His attitude had been, "Let's see how far I can go." Before he knew it, he was 10-0. Then 20-0. He fought for one reason: money. If you watch old clips of him, he fought as if he feared he wouldn't get paid if he lost. But even if he didn't love boxing, he loved being undefeated. By the time he retired he was neither as famous as Jack Dempsey nor as revered as Louis but he had something they didn't – an unblemished record. In retirement he'd ride that horse for all it was worth. If his record was 49-1, he felt he wouldn't be in demand as a guest speaker or TV commentator. Yet the lure of the ring nagged at him, perhaps more than he'd ever let on to the public.



Mayweather has said his fight on Sept. 12 will be his last..

"He wasn't content in retirement," said Duva. "He wanted to fight. He kept waiting for the right deal but it never happened."

Sometimes Marciano's lust for action bubbled close to the surface. When interviewing Sonny Liston for a TV show, Marciano and Liston got into an exchange of words. Duva still laughs about it. "Rocky said, 'Get me some gloves! I want to teach this guy something!'" Years later, while sparring with Muhammad Ali for their infamous "computer" fight, Marciano landed several hard punches on Ali's torso, causing the "Louisville Lip" to remark, "That man is crazy." As Duva put it, Marciano was simply "ready to fight anybody. I think Rocky was destined to be a fighter."

It also appears he was destined to be undefeated, for a record of 49-0 gave Marciano something he'd never had while he'd been active: a stamp of greatness, a sense that he was larger than life. In his day he'd been considered a likeable champion but not someone to be ranked along with the greats. Shortly after Marciano's retirement, THE RING polled 40 "experts" to name the greatest heavyweight champions. Marciano was barely mentioned. In time, though, Marciano would be elevated in ways he'd probably never imagined. The perfect record, as Larry Merchant once said, made Marciano not a greater fighter but a greater figure. In 2000, ESPN placed Marciano as No. 51 on a list of the Top 100 athletes of the 20th century. Not bad for a guy who thought being undefeated might get him a few TV gigs.

As for the bout that fell through?

"He would've knocked out Ingemar," Duva said. "Absolutely."

Duva may be right. Johannson wasn't the most dedicated of athletes. He might've underestimated the older Marciano and crumbled under the power of Marciano's vaunted right hand. Thus, Marciano would've brought the championship back to America. He would've been the first two-time heavyweight king. He would've been 50-0. And, if nothing else, a win might've moved Marciano up a few notches on ESPN's list, right past Chris Evert and O.J. Simpson.

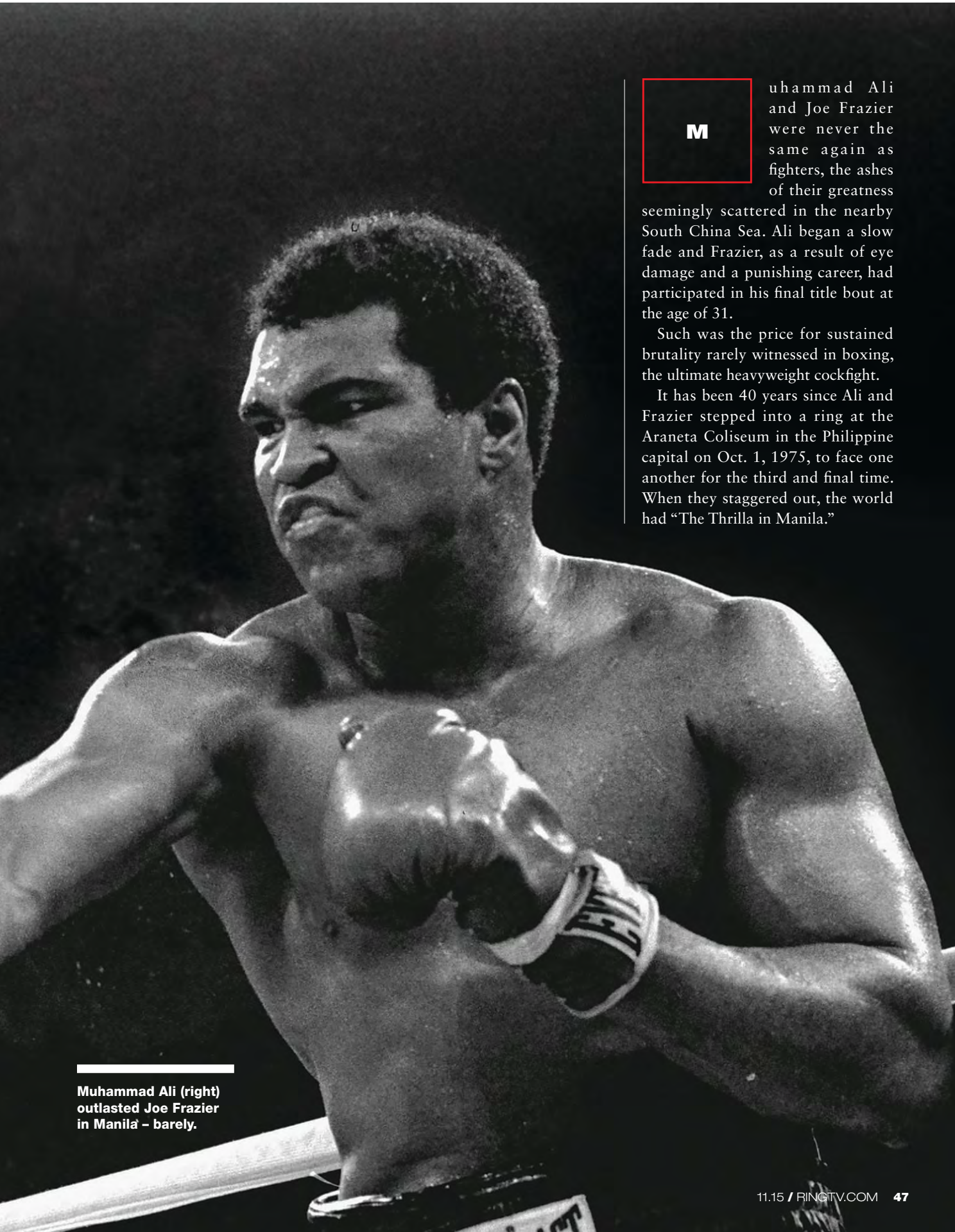
Marciano had to work hard against Ezzard Charles to remain unbeaten – twice.

'14 ROUNDS OF PURE HELL'

MUHAMMAD ALI AND **JOE FRAZIER** GAVE UP A PART OF THEMSELVES TO GIVE BOXING A CLASSIC

By **Tom Gray**

AP



Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier were never the same again as fighters, the ashes of their greatness seemingly scattered in the nearby South China Sea. Ali began a slow fade and Frazier, as a result of eye damage and a punishing career, had participated in his final title bout at the age of 31.

Such was the price for sustained brutality rarely witnessed in boxing, the ultimate heavyweight cockfight.

It has been 40 years since Ali and Frazier stepped into a ring at the Araneta Coliseum in the Philippine capital on Oct. 1, 1975, to face one another for the third and final time. When they staggered out, the world had "The Thrilla in Manila."

Muhammad Ali (right) outlasted Joe Frazier in Manila – barely.

Ali, making the 13th defense of the heavyweight championship, barely survived the fury of his rampaging nemesis. "Smokin" Joe took the best Ali had to offer and then sucked the air from his lungs with a devastating body attack mixed with deadly left hooks to the head. Only Ali's vast reservoir of courage and renowned sharpshooting pulled him through. Frazier, operating on near-zero visibility due to grotesque eye swelling, was retired by legendary trainer Eddie Futch at the end of 14 sizzling rounds.

Their place in boxing history was sealed but their respective resources were seriously diminished.

Jerry Izenberg, a critically acclaimed sports journalist who has written for The Newark Star-Ledger since 1951, befriended both principals during that golden era and covered the fight live.

"I've been working for 64 years and I've never seen anything like it before or since," he said. "There was no air conditioning, only an opening around the arena wall, and with the lights it must have been 110 degrees in the ring. Never has there been a fight with so much decisive ebb and flow. One minute you knew Ali was going to win and the next you knew Frazier was going to win, then back again.

"I've seen great rounds. The first round of Marvelous Marvin Hagler versus Thomas Hearns was of a similar motif, or the 15th round between Larry Holmes and Ken Norton, but this was 14 rounds of pure hell."

Holmes knows what it was like to fight that night. The future champ, who sparred with Ali and Frazier as a novice pro, stopped Rodney Bobick on the undercard in Manila.

"Looking back, the heat wasn't really a factor for me because I was fighting Bobick at 8 in the morning (Manila time)," said Holmes, who defeated Norton in his own epic war to win the heavyweight title in 1978. "I did get a little tired after the first three rounds but I had plenty of stamina and I'd trained extra hard for that fight. It was hotter – a lot hotter – later on.

"You have to be in peak condition to go through what Ali and Joe experienced over there. After I fought Kenny Norton, I weighed myself in the dressing room and I'd lost five pounds in an hour. If you're not perfectly conditioned for fighting at that level, then it's impossible to survive because not only are you working hard, but someone is trying to take your head off."

Frazier's son, Marvis, was a 15-year-old amateur at the time of the third Ali bout. He accompanied his father to the Philippines, thereby witnessing firsthand the brutality and its subsequent aftereffects.

The younger Frazier, now 54, said there was far more on the line than just a championship that day.

He said, "My father and I thought he could have gone out for that 15th round but Mr. Futch was the trainer and he was in charge," he said. "I guess he did what he thought was right for the athlete because he'd seen a couple of guys die in the ring and didn't want to risk my father's life. Recovery time was about a month or so. We stayed in Manila for a couple of days, went on vacation and then headed back to Philadelphia.

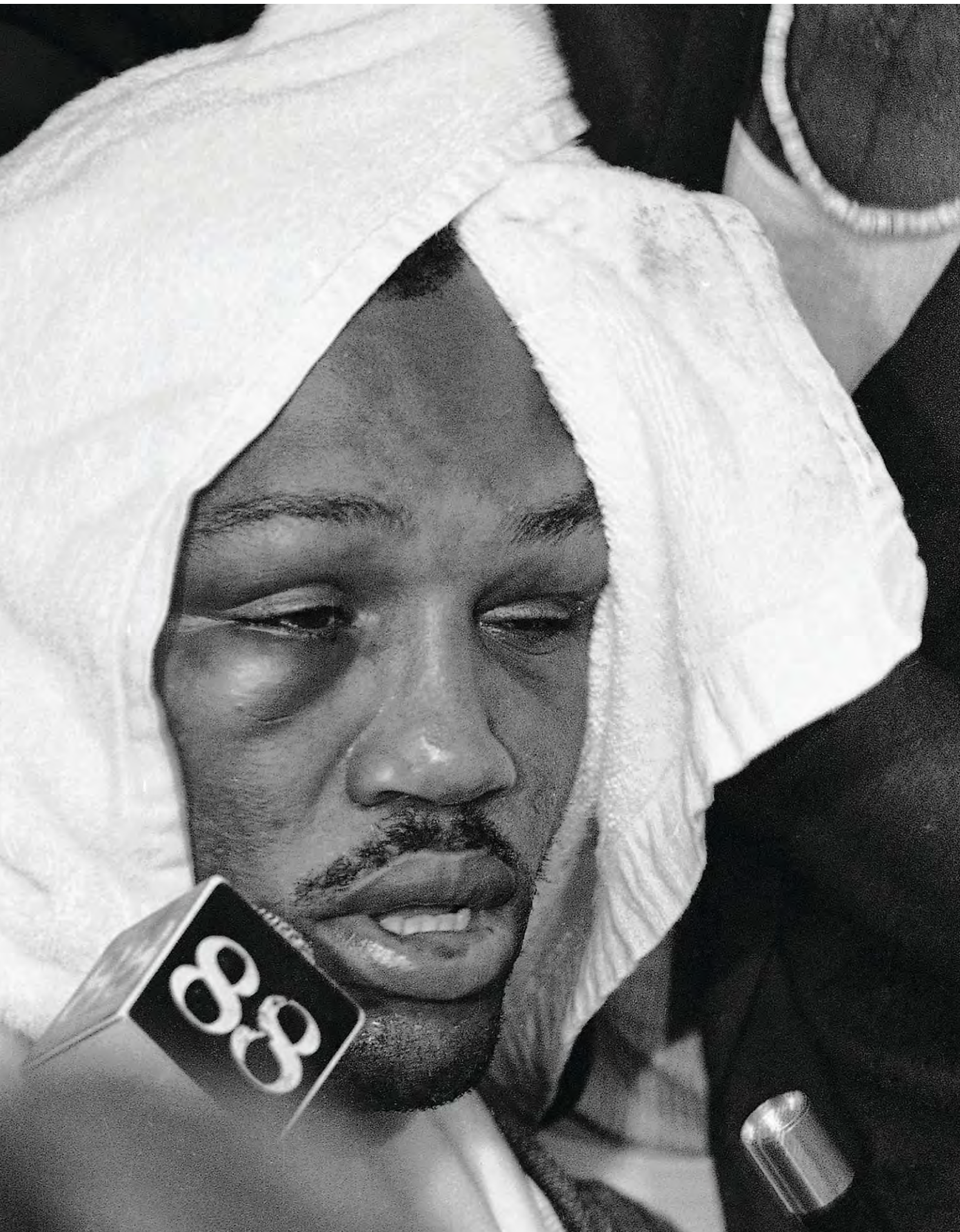
"It was just such a draining fight, particularly in that heat, and it took a long time for the heavy swelling around my father's head and face to subside."

The loser of a prizefight typically emerges in worse condition than the winner but Ali was at least as damaged as Frazier following the Thrilla.

After gingerly lifting himself off the corner stool to acknowledge victory, Ali could barely walk. Huge hematomas on both hips, a product of Frazier's "well-placed" body punching, hindered his maneuverability and the champion's head was covered in bumps. He

RING MAGAZINE

Frazier's face reflected the damage he suffered in defeat.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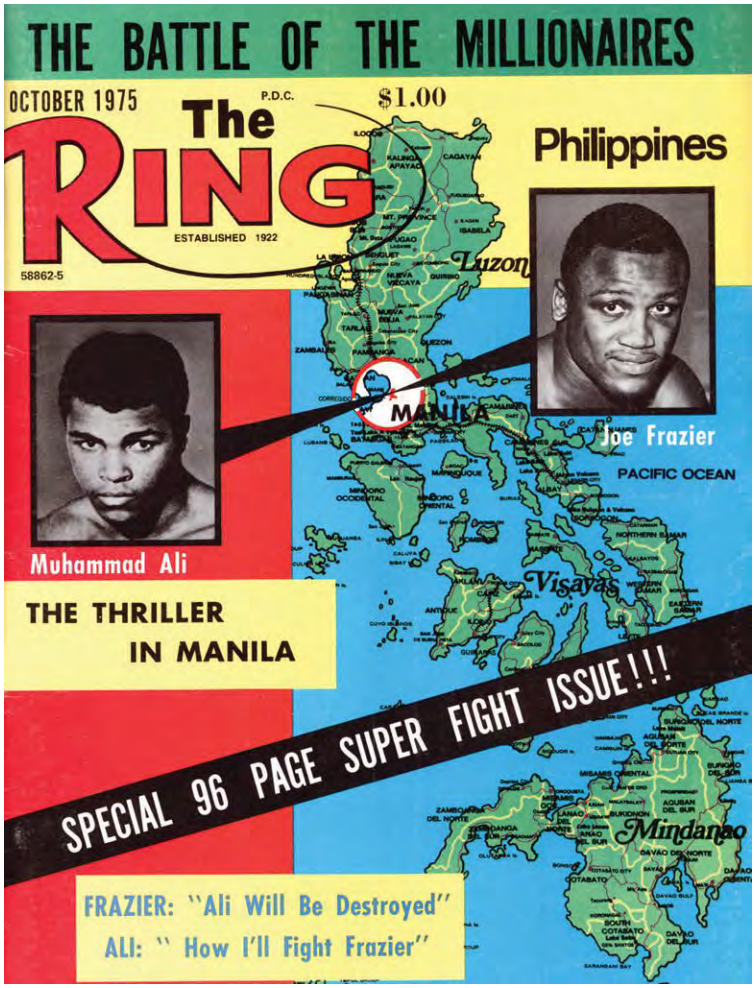
managed to carry out obligatory post-fight duties but was worn to a frazzle.

"Ali had taken a real beating and ultimately submitted to bedrest for a few weeks," said Dr. Ferdie Pacheco, who was the champion's personal physician from 1962 to 1977 and in the corner in Manila. "He did speak to Joe, who was barely responsive, the next day and that was probably the last thing Frazier needed. Ali immediately went into his mantra, 'Joe Frazier, get ready, you deserve a rematch. You almost got me this time, so you got a chance.' Joe smiled halfheartedly and the banter was one way, as usual."

There would be no rematch.

Frazier, his eyesight failing and skills declining, would enter the ring only twice more. He was bludgeoned to defeat in five rounds by George Foreman in their 1976 rematch and drew with an undistinguished Jumbo Cummings after a five-year absence in 1981.



THE RING editors held nothing back, producing a special preview issue for what they called the "Thriller in Manila."

Ali remained champion for more than two years following Manila but hundreds of rounds of sparring and an almost suicidal tendency to employ the now legendary "rope-a-dope" strategy made famous in his victory over Foreman proved costly. Ali was rarely hit at his peak but he was now reduced to wearing down opposition with a shock-absorber approach. His own durability became his biggest liability.

Holmes, who fought professionally until he was 52, was unimpressed then and now.

"Ali was always against the ropes, letting Joe and other guys bang away at him," he said. "You can't do that because it catches up with you later on and that's how fighters get hurt. I took a lot of punishment in the second half of my fight with Norton but I completely avoided punishment in the first half, so I recuperated quickly. I never let guys bang away on me."

Ali stopped woefully overmatched Jean-Pierre Coopman and Richard Dunn the following year but was deemed fortunate to win on points against elusive Philadelphian Jimmy Young. Then came a third bout against Ken Norton that September, which provided the most-stark evidence of his slide.

The ex-Marine had broken Ali's jaw and defeated him in 1973 and came very close to repeating the feat five months later, when he lost a razor-thin split decision.

Izenberg was present at the rubber match, which the champion won controversially on points.

"Ali was in decline and didn't have the same desire anymore," he said. "When he reached down into the well against Norton at Yankee Stadium, there was nothing there, but he did manage to keep it competitive. Kenny stopped throwing in the later rounds and although Ali didn't look dynamic, he threw some punches and landed some. Kenny gave that fight away, Ali didn't win it.

"You saw in the Earnie Shavers fight (September 1977) how far gone Ali was. Shavers was the greatest one-punch hitter I've ever seen and Ali told me there were times where he was unconscious on his feet that night. Now, if you go back two or three years, Earnie couldn't have hit him on the ass with a shovel.

"I spoke to Ali just prior to that fight and implored him to quit. I went over to see him with two video tapes. One was a TV show we did prior to the Foreman fight and Ali was in magnificent form, so funny

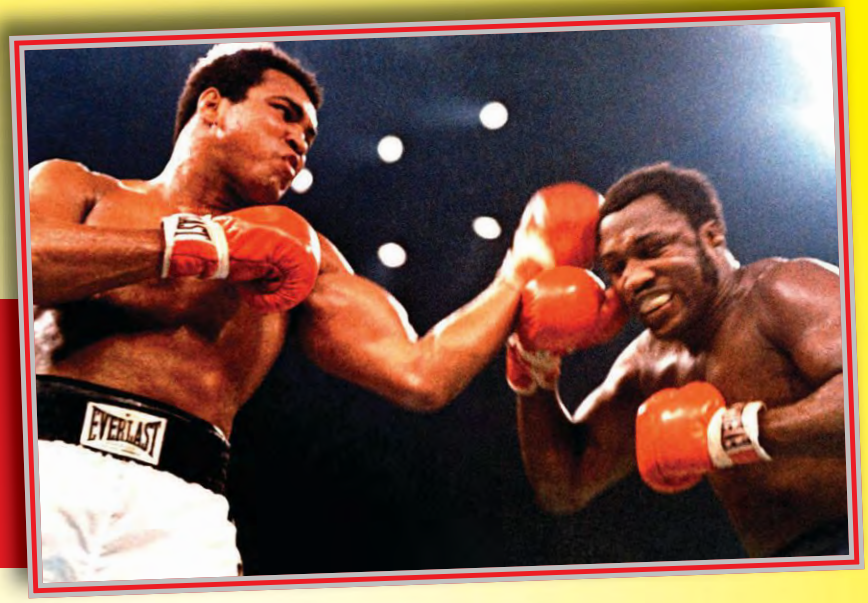
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 52)

RING MAGAZINE

IN THE FIGHTERS' WORDS

ALI AND FRAZIER AGREED THAT THEY WENT TO HELL AND BACK TOGETHER

By **Thomas Hauser**



Muhammad Ali experienced no joy when he watched his third fight with Joe Frazier on tape 14 years later.

In 1989, I sat on the sofa in my living room with Muhammad Ali beside me and watched a tape of his October 1, 1975, fight against Joe Frazier.

Boxing fans are familiar with what happened on that hot, humid morning in Manila.

The early rounds belonged to Ali. He outboxed Frazier, landed sharp, clean punches, and staggered Joe several times. Frazier kept coming inexorably forward.

The tide turned in the middle rounds. Ali was tiring. Frazier rocked him with thunderous blows. Muhammad's arms came down and Joe bludgeoned him against the ropes, pounding, pounding.

Ali regained the initiative in Round 12, wobbled Frazier and measured him for more. One round later, a jolting left hook knocked Joe's mouthpiece into the crowd. Frazier was shaken but finished the round.

In Round 14, Ali resumed his assault. Frazier's left eye was completely closed. The vision in his right eye was limited. He was spitting blood. Ali's punches were landing cleanly. Joe couldn't see them coming.

Frazier's trainer, Eddie Futch, stopped the fight after the 14th round.

Associated Press boxing writer Ed Schuyler later recalled, "The Thriller in Manila was the best fight I've ever seen. As it unfolded, everybody at ringside understood they were watching greatness. The pace never eased. It was hell the whole way. I've never seen two people give more, ever."

Jerry Izenberg observed, "What it came down to wasn't the heavyweight championship of the world. Ali and Frazier were fighting for something more important than that. They were fighting for the championship of each other."

I'd watched tapes of many fights with Muhammad sitting beside me prior to watching Ali-Frazier III. We'd been reviewing his career in chronological order for a book I was writing, "Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times."

This was different.

Despite the fact that it was one of his greatest ring triumphs, there was no joy in Muhammad's face as we watched Ali-Frazier III unfold.

In the past, we'd sat together and witnessed Henry Cooper knocking Cassius Clay close to oblivion with a picture-perfect left hook. That had seemed to entertain Muhammad.

We'd seen Joe Frazier put Ali on the canvas in Round 15 of their first encounter at Madison Square Garden and Ken Norton break Muhammad's jaw. Those punches were safely ensconced in the annals of history, as were the thudding blows that George Foreman landed in Zaire.

Watching Ali-Frazier III, Muhammad seemed to be re-experiencing the pain. Sitting beside me, he winced as some of Joe's blows landed. When the tape ended, he turned to me and said, "Frazier quit just before I did. I didn't think I could fight anymore."

Joe had his own memories of Manila when he and I talked.

"We were gladiators," Frazier told me. "I didn't ask no favors of him and he didn't ask none of me. I don't like him but I got to say, in the ring he was a man. In Manila, I hit him punches, those punches, they'd of knocked a building down. And he took 'em. He took 'em and he came back and I got to respect that part of the man. He was a fighter. He shook me in Manila. He won. But I sent him home worse than he came."

Physically, neither man was the same after Manila. They both won and they both lost.

Forty years later, "The Thrilla in Manila" stands as a symbol of what's best and worst about boxing. ★

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book - "Thomas Hauser on Boxing" - was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

and articulate. The other was a commercial he did for a bug spray called Raid (circa 1977) and I had to watch that over and over because I couldn't make out the word 'fog.'

"I played both of those tapes for Ali and asked him if he could see a difference. He said no and I knew I was wasting my time."

The champion lost one of the most loyal members of his inner circle, Pacheco, after the Shavers fight. Pacheco had collected results from a battery of tests which served to increase his concerns over Ali's failing health.

"The obvious physical determent was his diminishing reflexes and overall condition," said Pacheco, now 87. "That was enough for me. I told Ali to stop but his entourage wanted him to keep going. Since I was a doctor, I had to leave. There was no discussion with Ali after I made my decision. I was gone, period."

Pacheco's exit was prophetic, as Ali would lose three of his next four fights. An embarrassing loss to seven-fight novice Leon Spinks that cost him his title in February 1978 was followed by a decision victory seven months later, making him the first three-time heavyweight champion. Ali retired as WBA titleholder the following year but was lured back into the ring after a two-year hiatus to face Holmes, who handed out a frightful beating and forced Ali's corner to stop the fight in the 10th round. It was the only time Ali had been knocked out. His career finally came to an end in the Bahamas in December 1981, when Canadian slugger Trevor Berbick outpointed a shell of a once-great fighter over 10 rounds.

Meanwhile, Joe Frazier was training fighters in Philadelphia. The former champion ultimately worked with scores of prospects including his son, whom he took all the way to a shot at the linear heavyweight title.

"In the gym my father always kept me motivated and he was a great trainer," Marvis said. "He would

Larry Holmes (pictured here fighting Ali) was critical of Ali's willingness to take punches against the ropes because of the punishment he took.

often tell me that I didn't have the desire and that made me more determined. I fought 21 times as a professional and only lost to two Hall of Fame fighters, Larry Holmes and Mike Tyson. When I fought Larry, I thought I was ready but clearly I wasn't. I can't blame that on my father and the result (a first-round knockout) was down to me."

Joe Frazier, whose final bout occurred eight days before Ali faced Berbick, was content in retirement, according to his son.

"My father didn't really miss the fight game because he was so popular and everybody loved him," Marvis said. "There was one time when he was signing autographs and, because I was tired of waiting, I told a young boy he couldn't have one. I was only a kid but my father made me bring the boy back and told me never to dismiss someone like that. He explained that people loved him and I should appreciate that he was a famous person. He was once the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world and always conducted himself like a champion."

"The Thrilla in Manila" will always be celebrated but it is worth remembering the sacrifices Ali and Frazier made that day. We might never see another fight like it and, when one considers the damage, perhaps that isn't a bad thing.

Ali famously said it was "the closest thing to death" he ever experienced.

"Their lives were on the line and if ever a fight should have ended in a draw it was the one in Manila," Izenberg said. "Until Joe's eyesight began to go, that fight was dead-even on my card and neither guy deserved to lose. These were great warriors who would have fought each other on an ice floe with the ice melting around them." RING

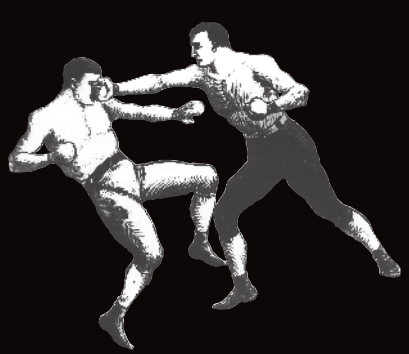
‘FIGHTING TO THE FINISH’

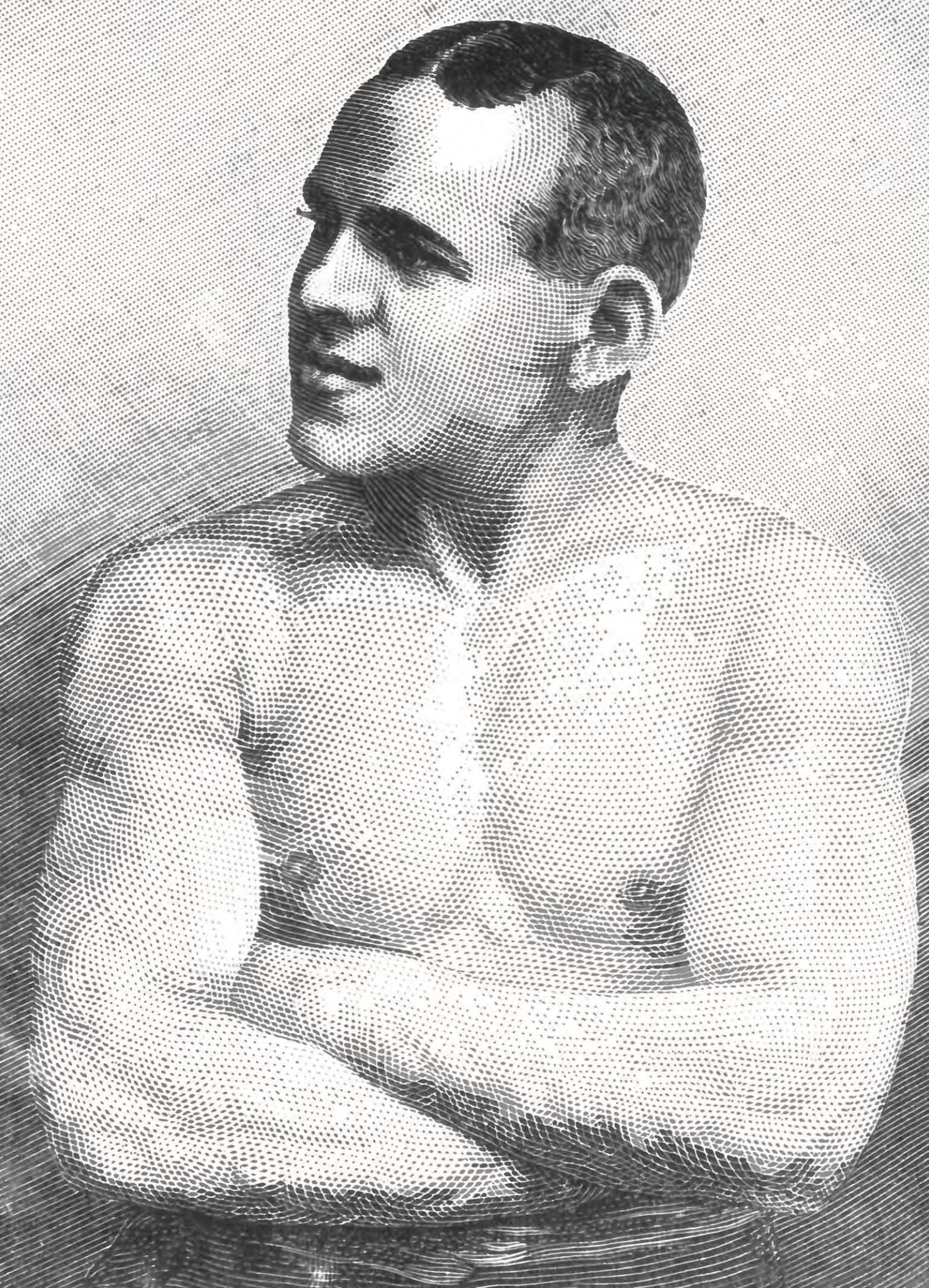
ILL-FATED **ANDY BOWEN** AND THE LONGEST BOXING MATCH IN HISTORY

By **Dr. Randy Roberts**

They said that Andy Bowen was a mulatto. And even in late-19th century New Orleans such fine distinctions of race meant something. The language of racial mixing, with such designations as quadroon, octoroon and quintroon, salt-and-peppered the novels of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Kate Chopin and George Washington Cable as well as the poetry of Walt Whitman and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Bowen was one of them, one of those mixed-blood offspring who writers insisted on labeling “tragic.”

Light complexioned, he claimed to be of Irish-Spanish extraction and passed as white. By trade he was a laborer, earning day wages with the strength of his hands and back. He pounded metal on anvils, hauled bales in cotton yards and unloaded banana boats in from Honduras. Anything, really, that needed done by an unskilled laborer in the port of New Orleans. »





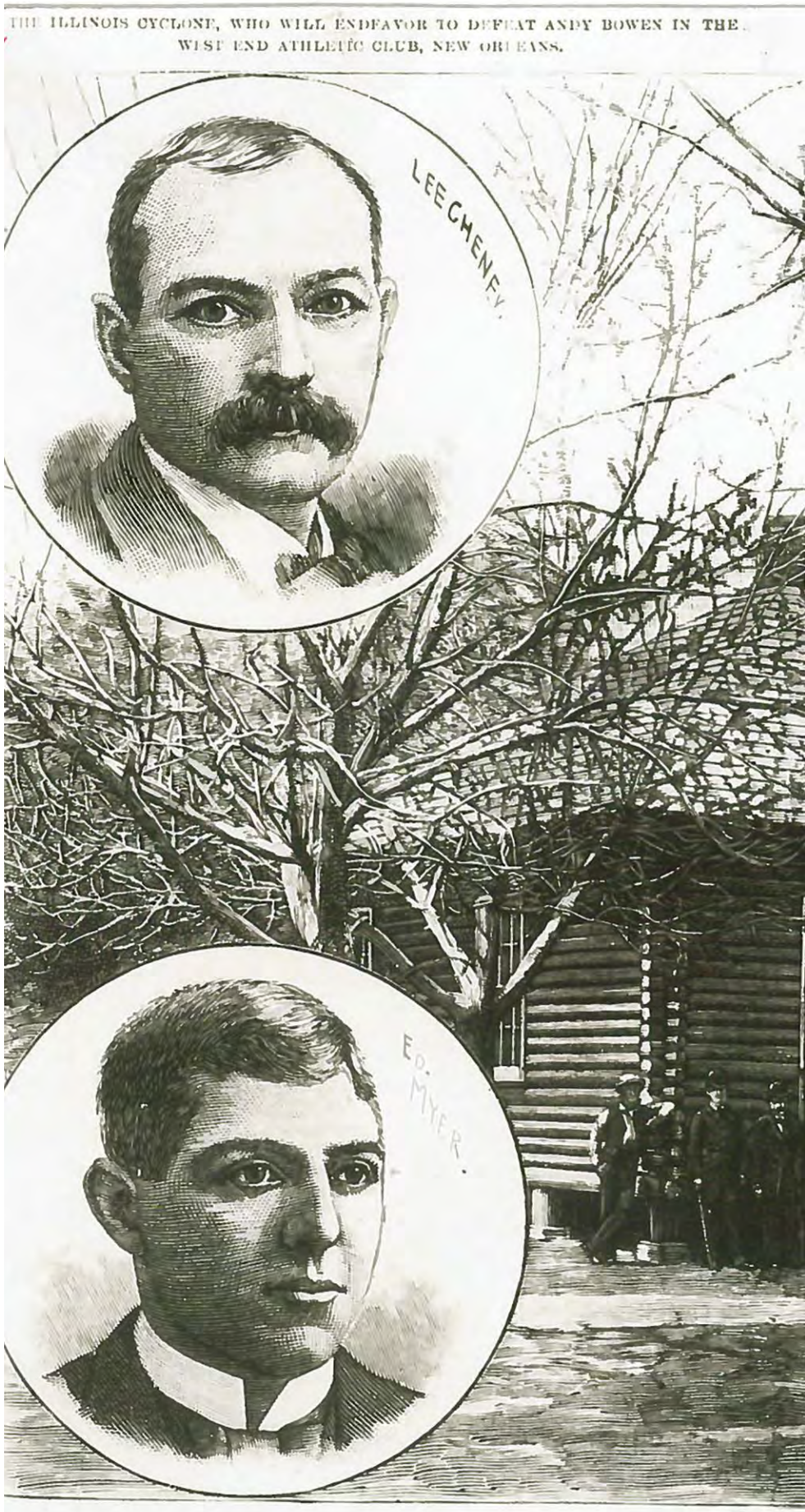
'FIGHTING TO THE FINISH'

By choice he was a prizefighter. Not much more than 5 feet 5 inches and 135 pounds, he cut his hair short in the style of the great John L. Sullivan and stood ready to fight anyone if the price was right, though as a small man Andy's price was never very high. In the early 1890s, when New Orleans occupied the vital center of a world boxing map that stretched from Great Britain and South Africa to Australia and New Zealand, Andy Bowen plied his trade and made a name for himself. He's largely forgotten now but back then he demonstrated the real meaning of "fighting to the finish."

New Orleans was America's original Sin City. During the Gilded Age it was as gilded as it got. Scratch its thin veneer, walk through the right door, and you might find anything—a bordello, opium den, ratting pit or illegal prizefight. At the time, prizefighting was universally regarded as a "relic of barbarism," a bane and a stain on the very notion of civilization. Outlawed by state legislators, punished by judges and condemned by journalists, it was virtually a sporting activity without a home.

Except in free-wheeling New Orleans. There, against the law, it existed. And in 1882, when Sullivan stopped Paddy Ryan to win the heavyweight title in a contest staged in Mississippi City (a short train ride from the Crescent City), pugilism began to prosper. By the late 1880s, New Orleans hosted scores of matches. Then in 1889 the Young Men's Gymnastic Club and Southern Athletic Club, organizations of lofty social standing and "silk stocking" membership, entered the mix, promoting gloved contests that conformed to the Marquess of Queensberry rules. Regarding these matches as "exhibitions," city and state authorities generally overlooked laws against prizefighting and permitted these quasi-respectable matches.

The pugilistic gold rush was



Here is a glimpse at Andy Bowen's Louisiana training facility in 1890, when he fought Billy Myer. Myer's handlers are pictured.

on. The best professional boxers in America boarded trains bound for New Orleans. James J. Corbett fought Jake Kilrain, Bob Fitzsimmons battled Arthur Upham and such other highly regarded men as Peter Maher, Charlie Mitchell and Frank Slavin made appearances. They came from all corners of the prizefighting world, but one, Andy Bowen, was home grown. Recognized by the National Police Gazette, the RING Magazine of the day, as the lightweight champion of the South, Bowen fought regularly.

The finest moments in the history of New Orleans prizefighting occurred in September 1892. Out on Royal Street, in a swank arena equipped with electric lights, the Olympic Club staged a prizefighting Triple Event for the ages. Three days, three championship contests.

Journalists scrambled to New Orleans from the major cities of the nation. A National Police Gazette writer asserted that "the whole civilized world" was giddy with anticipation for the results of "the greatest pugilistic carnival in the history of the world." The matches were so closely followed that news about the upcoming presidential election between Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland all but disappeared from the press.

On Sept. 5, Jack McAuliffe knocked out Billy Myer to retain the lightweight title. On Sept. 6, George "Little Chocolate" Dixon took out Jack Skelly to retain the featherweight championship. Then on the following night, in the fistic carnival's spectacular finale, James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett pounded John L. Sullivan into submission to win the heavyweight crown. The last bout ranks among the greatest contests in the history of

This is an illustration depicting Bowen's draw with Jim Glass in 1887.

the sport. It also demonstrated that professional boxing could be a lucrative commercial enterprise. After expenses, the Olympic Club cleared more than $50,000.

The money and the attention encouraged the city's athletic clubs to promote more events. Local battler Andy Bowen suddenly found himself in demand. Although his ring skills were minimal, patrons applauded his unusual stamina and fighter's heart. By Spring 1893, the prestigious Olympic Club backed Bowen, matching him for the Lightweight Championship of the South against "Texas" Jack Burke of Galveston, a fighter who, the New Orleans Daily Picayune announced, had "unlimited confidence in himself." The boxing writer for the Daily Picayune thought that the contest was a crossroad match for both fighters and predicted it would be "a fast and furious battle while it lasts."

"While it lasts" were the operative three words in the phrase. Similar to the other major contests of the period, the Bowen-Burke match would be fought according to the Queensberry rules but would not have a set round limit. A "fight to the finish," it would end only when one of the men was knocked out or could not continue.

Bowen trained to go the unspecified distance. He worked out daily on the Gulf Coast, lifting dumbbells, handling Indian clubs, sparring, and running between 15 and 20 miles a day. "Brown as a bronze statue," he had trained to a fine edge. "Burke can bet every dollar on me," he said, "for I will whip him certainly."

By April 6, the day of the fight, New Orleans was alive with "Texas sports" and other out-of-town visitors. More people attended the match than any of the period. Not even for the great Fistic Carnival of 1892 had so many spectators crammed into the Olympic Club, and carriages and pedestrians lined Royal Street. Inside, the incandescent whiteness of electric lights lent an otherworldly atmosphere of excitement to the evening and confirmed the drawing

power of prizefighting.

Bowen began the fight like he expected to make another appointment before the end of the night. Time and again in the opening round he rushed Burke, making up for his inferior technique with his superior strength. Occasionally he landed a punch, but by the end of the round Burke caught on to his opponent's primitive strategy and avoided the furious rushes.

In the second round, Burke took the offensive, landing "clever jabs on Bowen's nose" but causing no meaningful damage. In response, Bowen attacked Burke with vicious body blows until the Texan's torso was "red and swollen."

Bowen's strength was undeniable. The punches hurt, and Burke responded by clinching. To the dismay of the spectators, the contest turned boringly predictable: Bowen plowed forward, swinging for all he was worth, and Burke grabbed and held, looking more like he wanted a bit of close dancing than championship fighting. Thirty rounds came and went. Spectators yawned. Some began whistling "Home, Sweet Home." The serenade stirred Bowen, and he responded with a flurry of activity. The accumulation of his punches finally knocked – or pushed – Burke to the floor, and he would have been down for the count if the "gong" signaling the end of the round had not sounded.

Soon both boxers weakened. Their arms hung leaden at their sides, their flailing swings resembled mere shadows of punches. Bowen tried to force the action, but Burke refused to do anything but hold. In the 51st round, referee "Professor" John Duffy, the city's most respected official, heard Bowen ask Burke, "Why don't you fight?" "I cannot, both of my hands are gone," replied the Texan boxer. Taking a close look at Burke, Duffy observed, "I saw that his wrist above the glove and the forearm were swollen to twice their natural size." Refusing to quit, he told Duffy, "If Bowen whipped him, it was all right."

The three-minute rounds tumbled by one after another. At 3 a.m., they struggled out of their corners for the 89th round. Rumors circulated that Burke had broken his wrist; it was the only way to account for his refusal to punch. But he fought – or at least slogged – on. Some hungry spectators went out for breakfast. Others departed for some sleep or caught a nap in their seats. But most grimly stayed put, sensing that they were witnessing something unique.

About 45 minutes later the fight went into the 101st round. That made it the longest gloved contest in history, surpassing the 100-round, 6-hour, 39-minute match between Dan Needham and Patsy Kerrigan in San Francisco in 1890. By then it had also exceeded the longest bare-knuckle contest, a 6-hour, 15-minute match that had taken place in Australia.

At the end of 108 rounds "Professor" Duffy decided that he was the only one who could end the fight. Shortly before sunrise he told the fighters they had two more rounds to win the fight, or he was going to call it a "no decision." Burke said he was doing the best he could with two broken wrists. Bowen was too exhausted to say much of anything.

Two actionless rounds later, Duffy ended the fight. It had lasted 7 hours, 20 minutes, a full, dull 110 rounds.

Burke's seconds examined him in the dressing room. His stomach and ribs were swollen and his eyes and ears puffy, but he was uncut. It was his hands and wrists that were most damaged. "It was my misfortune that the fight did not end differently," he told reporters. "I did not try to hit Bowen at first, and when I did I broke the bones in both my hands. … You see how swollen they are now, and they pain me fearfully now and did throughout the fight."

Bowen's face was unmarked. "I am feeling as well as when I went into the fight, and I got no punishment worth talking about; but I am sore over the result," he said. Under the rules of the Olympic Club, a no-decision verdict meant that neither fighter received any part of the purse – that, in fact, they had fought 110 rounds for free.

The day after the fight the leaders of the Olympic Club generously split the purse of $2,500 and paid each fighter half. Bowen chirped at the decision. As far as he was concerned, he had carried the fight, delivered all the heavy punches and deserved the lion's share of the purse. But with the onset of the depression of 1893 and growing hard times, he took what was offered and looked for other paydays.

Boxing in New Orleans was close to the end of its golden age. Financial problems hit the Olympic Club, the Crescent City Athletic Club and several other organizations that promoted matches. Then legal decisions reversed the cozy relationship prizefighting enjoyed with the police. But, oddly, Andy Bowen dealt the coup de grace of boxing in New Orleans.

After the Burke match, Bowen continued to fight, but friends and associates said his heart was no longer in the sport. In 1893 he engaged in another marathon match, defeating Jack Everhardt in 85 rounds, and then in 1894 he accepted a match against George "Kid" Lavigne, one of the greatest lightweight boxers of the era. It was an obvious mismatch. Compared to the master craftsman from Michigan, Bowen was not much more than a determined club fighter with a solid punch. Making matters worse, he was losing interest in the sport and the "Kid" was improving with every fight.

Before the contest, referee John Duffy noticed a difference in Bowen, some slight indication of disinterest. He had seen it in Andy's dressing room. Something was wrong with the little fighter, he thought. "(H)e looked as though he had something on his mind. He seemed troubled and did not look himself."

The fighters met in the ring at the Auditorium Athletic Club on Dec. 14 for a purse of $3,000. In the early rounds, a reporter observed, Bowen "did some very clever work, especially in ducking." But any boxer whose

best efforts involve ducking out of danger usually ends up not ducking quite as often as necessary. This was the case of Andy Bowen. Before long, Lavigne was having his way with the New Orleans boxer.

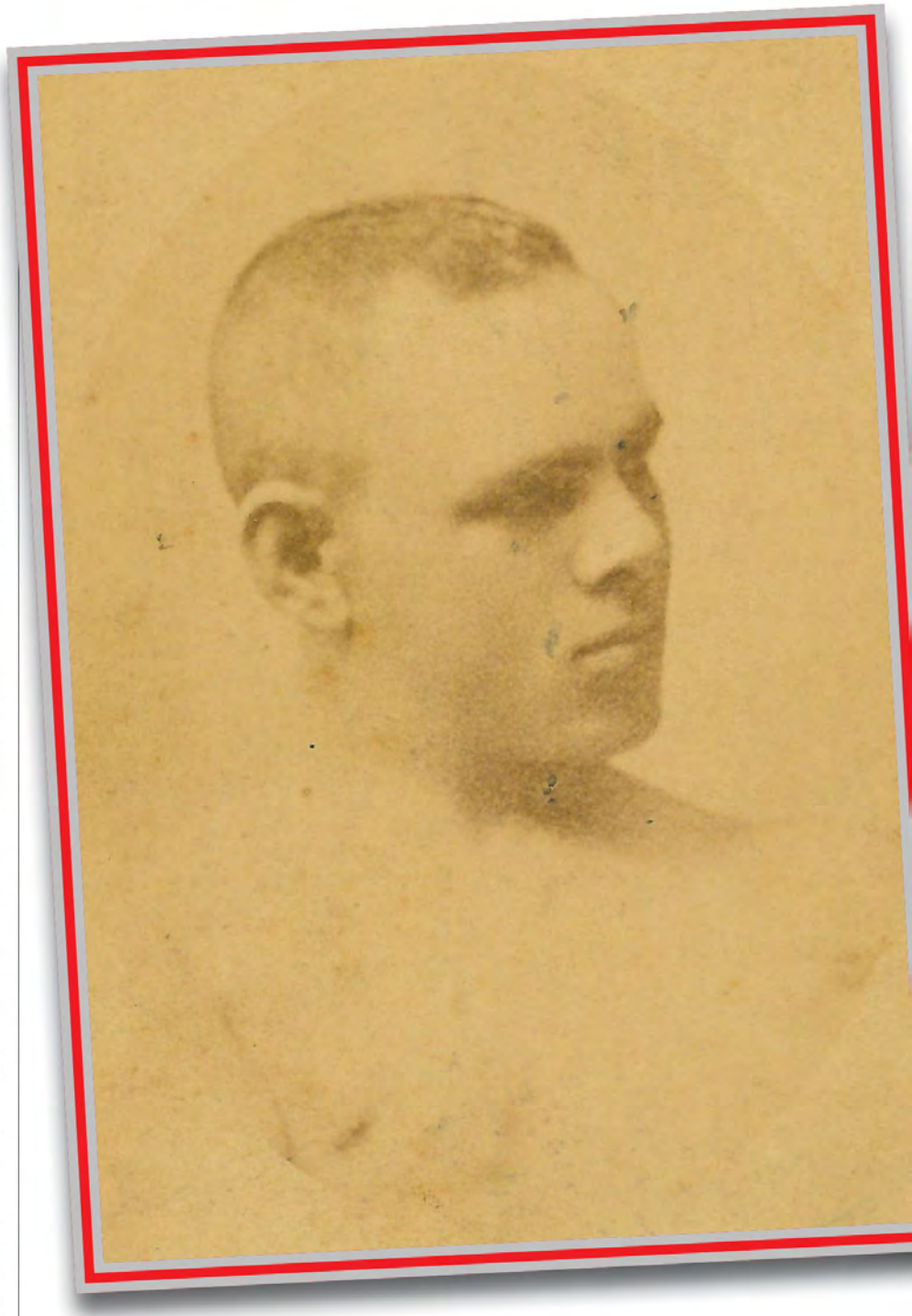
As the fight progressed, Bowen audibly registered the beating he was taking. "He had a habit of grunting pretty loud," a Daily Picayune boxing scribe noted, when Lavigne landed a body punch, "which he did pretty often." Soon, spectators began to laugh, some even anticipating and imitating Bowen's yelps. It rattled him, and at times he appeared confused, like he was caught in trap with no way to escape. It was as if Bowen had too much heart and stamina to get taken out, and too little talent to protect himself.

Duffy observed Bowen's painful predicament. He could have stopped the contest, but he didn't. That wasn't his job, he thought. "(T)he seconds should have thrown up the sponge when they saw that the poor fellow was gone, but of course, as referee, I could not tell them to do so."

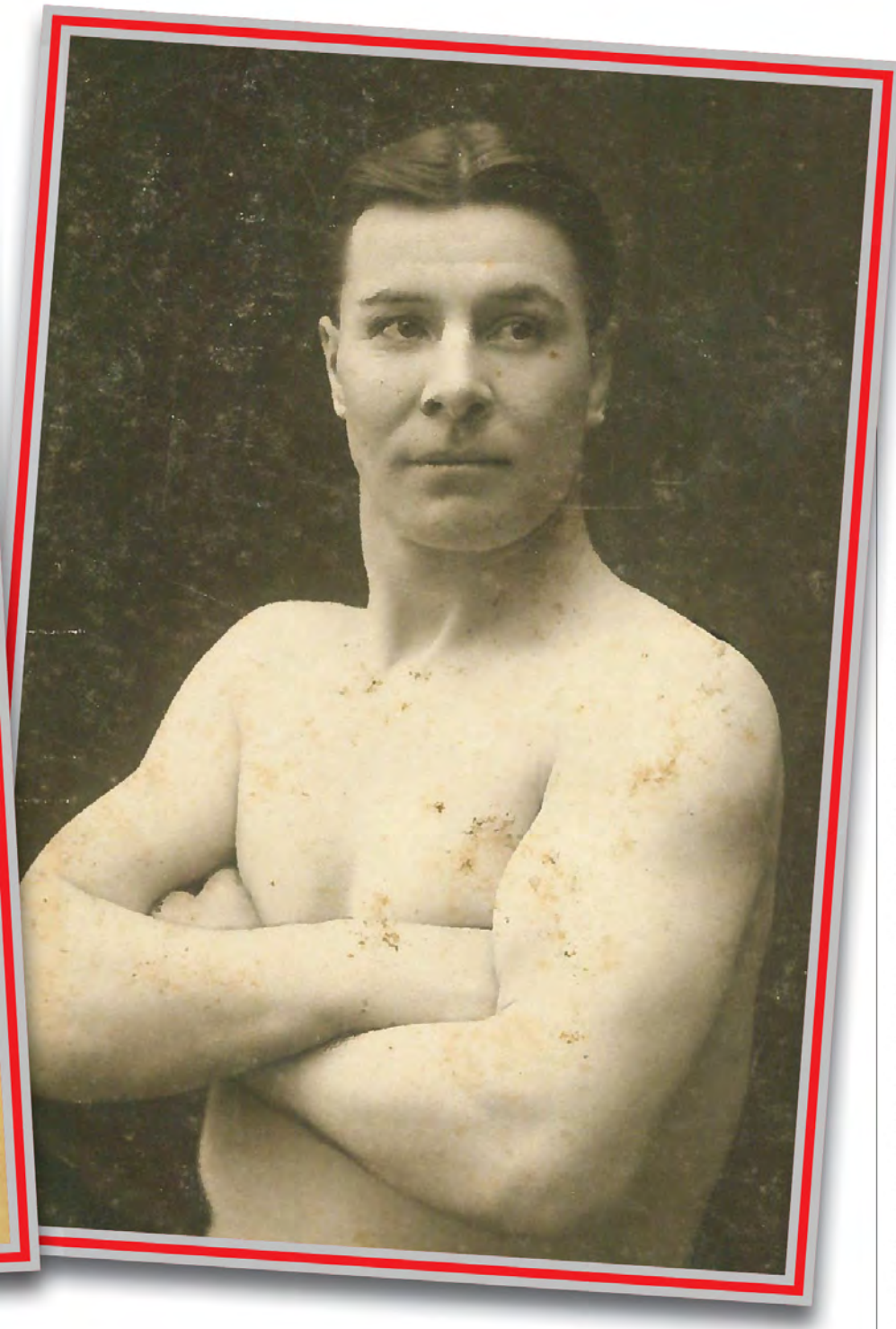
So the fight continued. Unlike the long but oddly nonviolent Bowen-Burke contest, this match witnessed too many hard punches landed, almost all by Lavigne. After a series of clean blows early in the 18th round, Bowen "staggered around like a drunken man." Near his corner, he grabbed Lavigne, wrapping an arm around his opponent's neck and holding on to avoid more punishment. Finally, Duffy stepped between the fighters and separated them, suspecting that a couple more punches would finish Bowen.

Free from Andy's clutches, Lavigne went to work, landing repeated blows. The last combination demonstrated the "Kid's" skill. He feinted with his right, and then, as Bowen attempted to duck, shot out an elbow which caught Andy under the chin. As Bowen raised his head, Lavigne threw a right to his jaw.

Bowen fell hard. Although stretched canvas covered the ring



TWO ACTIONLESS ROUNDS LATER, DUFFY ENDED THE FIGHT. IT HAD LASTED 7 HOURS, 20 MINUTES, A FULL, DULL 110 ROUNDS.



The principals in the longest fight: Bowen (previous page) and Burke.

floor, it was unpadded and afforded no protection for a fighter. As a result, an observer wrote, Bowen's "head hit the wooden floor with a thud which could have been heard a block away." Some spectators feared that he had broken his neck, but after his seconds and a doctor had worked on him for five minutes, he began to breathe. Yet that was all he did. Other than breathing on his own, he was out cold and his seconds had to carry him from the ring.

According to the accumulated and accepted lure of prizefighting – little more than superstitions passed down from one generation to the next – there were signs of hope. Although unconscious in his dressing room, Bowen's hands continued to move as if he were fending off Lavigne's punches. That was a "favorable omen," said an authority, as was the fact that he vomited. It was enough to convince his supporters that there was no need to take him to the hospital and instead they transported him to his tiny home on Thalia Street.

There his wife Mathilde kept vigil. With Victorian pathos, a New Orleans Daily Picayune journalist wrote, "Through the long hours of the night ... and through the gray dawn until the first rays of yester sun streamed forth to herald the approach of another day, a close and anxious watch was kept at the side of the bed whereon Andy Bowen, once the inconquerable champion light weight of the south, but now defeated, unconscious and fast being wrapt in the embrace of death, who the mightiest of pugilists cannot withstand, lay." At 6:43 a.m., "he passed into eternity."

"Andy Bowen is dead, and professional pugilism in New Orleans will more than likely fill the same grave," predicted a journalist. An editorialist for the Daily Picayune seconded the opinion. The fatality, he wrote, "should sound the death knell of that bloody brutality misnamed 'sport.'" And so it happened. Soon after the end of Andy Bowen, the Louisiana Supreme Court eliminated the legal fiction that "boxing exhibitions" in exclusive athletic clubs was not actually "prize fighting." Even in the most gilded of cities, there were limits to the toleration of the courts. The golden age of the New Orleans ring had passed.

After mourning his death, little more was written about Andy Bowen, though one court record referred to him as a "mulatto." His was another "mulatto's tragic end," remembered today only as a footnote to the history of boxing.

'A FIGHT FANS NEED'

CAN **MIGUEL COTTO** VS. **CANELO ALVAREZ** REMOVE THE BAD TASTE LEFT BEHIND BY MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO?

By **Bernard Fernandez**

CANELO: ED MULHOLLAND

EDITOR'S NOTE *This issue of THE RING Magazine went to press before Miguel Cotto and Canelo Alvarez had finalized their deal to fight in November. They were expected to meet on Nov. 21 in either Las Vegas or New York City. Please go to RingTV.com for news on the fight.*

Miguel Cotto vs. Canelo Alvarez will revive Puerto Rico vs. Mexico passions.

It is simple economic reality that the value of anything is how much people are willing to pay for it. That said, a vast number of people around the world shelled out dearly for the long-anticipated May 2 fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. From the five-figure cost of prime ringside seats at Las Vegas' MGM Grand to the $100 charge for the HD pay-per-view telecast, the fight obliterated every financial record for a boxing match, with the victorious Mayweather pulling down an almost-unfathomable $240 million to Pacquiao's consolation prize of $160 million.

Of course, there is such a thing as buyer's remorse. And for some – OK, many – of those who surrendered significant chunks of their disposable income to bear witness to the fight game's latest must-see event, what was delivered failed to come anywhere close to fulfilling all those inflated expectations. While it might be true that Mayweather again was an artiste in winning a unanimous decision, a pugilistic equivalent of Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, few of Michelangelo's admirers in 16th-century Italy would have gone into debt for the privilege of observing the genius at work if the only glimpses afforded them were of him rinsing off his brushes.

But fight fans are a resilient lot, or at least stubbornly hopeful, in the belief that the next Big Thing in their favorite sport will erase or ease the memory of any past disappointments. It is with that sense of optimism that the Nov. 21 pairing of THE RING, lineal and WBC middleweight champion Miguel Cotto and former RING, WBA and WBC junior middleweight titleholder Canelo Alvarez represents the best hope of 2015 to alleviate the headaches brought on by Mayweather's clinically precise but emotionally uninvolving dissection of Pacquiao. At Cotto's

insistence, the contracted weight is 155 pounds, five below the middleweight limit and just one above the junior middleweight cutoff.

Cotto (40-4, 33 knockouts) is the first Puerto Rican fighter to have captured world titles in four weight classes and is riding a three-bout win streak that has rejuvenated his career at 34. He is a certain future inductee into the International Boxing Hall of Fame and a fighter whose sometimes underappreciated boxing skills are leavened by a willingness to stand his ground and trade punches as circumstances dictate.

Much of the same fan-friendly attributes are ascribed to Alvarez (45-1-1, 32 KOs), who at 25 is widely regarded as a future superstar if he hasn't already attained that lofty distinction. His youth, boyish good looks and indisputable box-office pull – he was mainly responsible for the turnout of 31,000 for his most recent outing, a slam-bam, third-round knockout of the dangerous James Kirkland on May 9 at Minute Maid Park in Houston – already have stamped him, in the words of longtime ESPN boxing analyst Teddy Atlas, "as the next pay-per-view god or emperor, however you want to call it. That crown would have to be put on his head if you're going to put it on anyone's head."

Toss in the fact that Cotto is Puerto Rican and Alvarez is Mexican, a high-profile renewal of a classic rivalry involving fighters from those countries, and it makes for a can't-miss kind of promotion, both from a business sense and where it counts, inside the ropes.

Right?

"It's 'appointment television' and a good on-site event for boxing," agreed Larry Merchant, the retired boxing analyst for HBO Sports. "It's a natural rivalry between two top fighters who also happen to come from Puerto Rico and Mexico,

Alvarez will be facing his third future Hall of Famer in Cotto. He has fought Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Shane Mosley.

respectively, countries with a long and rich history of competing against each other in the ring.

"There will be big expectations because of the last two fights that each of them had, when each looked sensational. So, yeah, it's a big deal."

Randy Gordon, a former editor at THE RING and former head of the New York State Athletic Commission who now co-hosts a twice-weekly show with former heavyweight contender Gerry Cooney on Sirius satellite radio, said he is eager to see the bout he regards as a can't-miss attraction.

"I think it's going to be everything we hope it's going to be," Gordon said. "On May 2, we all knew (Mayweather-Pacquiao) was going to be a major event. We also hoped it would turn into something more and it didn't. But Cotto-Canelo … that's going to be everything fight fans want. It's what fight fans need."

Also adding her voice to what appears to be the majority opinion is Main Events CEO Kathy Duva, who sees no immediate obstacles to what shapes up as a classic night of hard-fought, two-way action.

"It's the kind of fight that people should be getting, if you're asking them to pay (for pay-per-view)," she said. "There is some question as to the outcome, which is good. You've got a legend (Cotto) who is rounding the corner of his prime against a young star who only has one defeat to a great fighter, as (Sugar Ray) Leonard had in (his first fight) with (Roberto) Duran. Leonard came back from that and I think Canelo certainly has shown he can come back from his loss to Mayweather. I have a great deal of respect for Canelo. I think he's terrific."

But there are always perceived negatives to any fight, no matter how alluring they appear to be on paper, and it is left to Atlas to play the role of devil's advocate. He points out that both Cotto and Alvarez were barely competitive in their showdowns with Mayweather and that each has exploitable flaws that are masked by the fact that each is so similar stylistically.

"Timing is always important," Atlas said. "Timing is everything in life. Coming off the Mayweather-Pacquiao debacle, where so many people were upset and disappointed, and in some cases infuriated, the timing for this fight to be successful is impeccable.

"Will it be a great fight? I think it'll be a good fight. Both guys are available to hit and be hit. It's also

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 66)

Oscar De La Hoya says the powers that be should focus more on fights than business.

Q&A:
DE LA HOYA SAYS MAYWEATHER IS THE PROBLEM

By **Michael Rosenthal**

OSCAR DE LA HOYA IS NO FAN of Floyd Mayweather Jr., as he demonstrated during a recent interview about the Nov. 21 fight between Miguel Cotto and Canelo Alvarez.

"I think what's going to restore boxing back to its glory days is the day Mayweather retires," De La Hoya told THE RING. "This is the Mayweather era. Ever since he beat me (in 2007), when he started making noise, when he started making money, is probably the worst era in boxing ever."

Where did that comment come from?

Well, De La Hoya was contacted to discuss Cotto-Alvarez. That included the timing of the fight, which comes a half year after Mayweather's superfight against Manny Pacquiao left so many fans feeling as if they were ripped off.

Here's how the conversation went.

THE RING: What do you think went wrong on May 2?

De La Hoya: It was all about business. It wasn't about an actual fight, it wasn't about actually entertaining the public. It was based only on how much business it could do. I believe that in any sport, if you put business before the actual competition, 99.9 percent of the time it's not going to work. You're not going to get results. … People weren't happy with the event (on May 2). How tickets were handled, the pay-per-view price and, obviously, the actual fight. Mayweather fights … strike that … Mayweather boxes without ever taking any risks because he's thinking about business, thinking about his next fight."

THE RING: Some have suggested that Mayweather-Pacquiao damaged the sport. Agree?

DLH: I believe it was damaging for Mayweather and Pacquiao. I still think people have high hopes for certain fighters. I'll give you an example. Canelo fought a week after that fight and generated the biggest HBO rating in quite a while and it delivered. It gave people their money's worth.

THE RING: Do you think the Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez fight will give boxing the boost Mayweather-Pacquiao didn't?

DLH: One thing is for sure: People who buy this fight, they know they'll get guaranteed action. That's for sure. Will it do 4.5 million homes (pay-per-view)? No. But even if we reach half that number, that's a lot of people who still have a sour taste in their mouths from Mayweather-Pacquiao.

(This is where De La Hoya made the assertion that Mayweather's retirement will bring boxing back to its glory days. He continued after that statement.)

DLH: It's not that (Mayweather) doesn't want to entertain fans. He just has a boring style. And people are fed up. They're onto his way of doing in the fans. I think Canelo-Cotto will help restore people's confidence in the sport. We have a lot of ground to make up, which isn't impossible if we keep making good fights. … David Lemieux-Gennady Golovkin. I'm talking about that kind of fight. Those are the type of fights that will slowly but surely restore boxing to its glory days, when it was more about the fights themselves than the business. ★

CANELO: SCOTT HALLERAN/GETTY IMAGES; DE LA HOYAS/MAYWEATHER: DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

a fight with two popular Latinos, drawing from that great fanbase. Those fans are going to buy this fight in a big way and I think non-Latino fans will, too. It'll be good theater. Their styles dictate that."

But Atlas said appearances, for better or for worse, sometimes can be deceiving. As great as they are, Mayweather and Pacquiao generated minimal excitement while lesser talents, which Atlas claims Cotto and Alvarez are, are likely to find a way to raise the roof.

"I don't think Cotto is quite what a lot of his fans, who wear their hearts on their sleeves, believe he is," Atlas continued. "It could be a mirage, based on his last three fights. Before that, he looked like a guy that appeared to be in the twilight of his career, on the verge of being done. Then he knocks out Sergio Martinez, who had nothing left and whose legs were shot, and Delvin Rodriguez, another shot fighter. In his last fight he stopped (Daniel) Geale, who's in his mid-30s, had to come down in weight and never was a next-level fighter.

"I don't know if those last three fights are indicative of Cotto having a real resurgence. He was in against opponents he obviously was going to look good against and he did.

"And Canelo, to me, is kind of one-dimensional. He's a strong guy. If you stand in front of him, he can be successful. Obviously, Kirkland stood right in front of him. Kirkland gets insulted if you miss him with a punch."

The other panelists weighing in on Cotto-Canelo, however, were more positive in their assessments of the principals. To them, Cotto and Alvarez, who has emerged as the lead pony in the Golden Boy Promotions stable, are are more like higher-grade versions of Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward, who faced one another in three classic bouts.

Cotto has thrived under new trainer Freddie Roach the past couple of years.

"It's not only how good they are, and Cotto and Canelo are very good," Gordon said. "It's how good they are against each other. It's a cliche, but styles really do make fights. Cotto and Canelo have everything, style-wise, to make a great fight. It's a fight I very much want to see."

Merchant said that he does believe Cotto, who will be making his second appearance for Roc Nation Promotions after leaving Top Rank, has rediscovered his passion for boxing since turning his career over to seven-time Boxing Writers Association of America Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach.

"Cotto's history has been to seek out the biggest and best challenges," Merchant said. "You're talking about a veteran who lost a couple of big fights (to Mayweather and Austin Trout), took some time off to reevaluate, decided to make a comeback and, thanks to some smart matchmaking and the direction of Freddie Roach, has really revived himself. We've seen him beat some beatable opponents and look good in every case. Now, can he do it against a young, live, talented and – let's not forget this – experienced fighter? He's going to be an underdog but not a big underdog.

"What Cotto brings to the table is his championship. He brings his name. He brings a large and loyal fan base. That's a lot of bring."

Duva said that, while Cotto probably has more to lose, neither fighter will be damaged if they provide enough entertainment value for the paying customers.

"I've always believed that if you get a great fight, there's no loser," she said. "But there are always immediate consequences to winning and losing. Is it a passing of the torch if Canelo wins? Cotto isn't old, by today's standards, but he's had a long career. Canelo is still on the way up. If he wins, then you have boxing's next superstar. Losing to Mayweather didn't set him back. Losing to a legend isn't ever as damaging as losing to anyone else." RING

'THE FUTURE IS NOW'

THE HANDLERS OF **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** AND **DAVID LEMIEUX** JUMPED ON THE CHANCE TO MAKE THIS FIGHT WHILE THE IRON WAS HOT

By **Steve Kim**

Gennady Golovkin (left) and David Lemieux have knocked out a combined 61 of the 69 fighters they've faced as professionals.

ED MULHOLLAND/GOLDEN BOY/GOLDEN BOY VIA GETTY IMAGES

On the afternoon of July 25 news spread like wildfire that a middleweight title unification bout between Gennady Golovkin and David Lemieux had been consummated for Oct. 17 at Madison Square Garden. In some ways it overshadowed that night's scheduled bout between light heavyweight stalwart Sergey Kovalev and Nadjib Mohammedi.

The excitement on the part of fans and even seasoned members of the press corps was palpable. While the pending matchup between Miguel Cotto (the RING and linear middleweight champion) and Canelo Alvarez is the biggest remaining event on the boxing calendar for 2015, Golovkin-Lemieux might end up being the most compelling.

Lemieux (34-2, 31 knockouts) did his part against Hassan N'Dam on June 20 in Montreal, when he seemed to be shot out of a cannon at the opening bell and threw one crushing left hook after another from his heels. When it was over, N'Dam had gone down four times in a wonderfully crazy fight, Lemieux had won the vacant IBF title and the French Canadian had stamped himself as a

Willie Monroe (right) in May joined a long list of fighters to be overwhelmed by Gennady Golovkin.

KO ARTISTS

One reason fans are salivating over the Gennady Golovkin-David Lemieux fight is the high probability that they'll see a knockout. These fighters have the highest knockout ratios of those rated by THE RING:

100.0 Dmitry Kudryashov, cruiserweight (18-0, 18 KOs)

100.0 Artur Beterbiev, light heavyweight (9-0, 9 KOs)

97.1 Deontay Wilder, heavyweight (34-0, 33 KOs)

90.9 Gennady Golovkin, middleweight (33-0, 30 KOs)

90.9 Richard Commey, lightweight (22-0, 20 KOs)

90.0 Ilunga Makabu, cruiserweight (19-1, 18 KOs)

87.5 Naoya Inoue, junior bantamweight (8-0, 7 KOs)

86.7 Daniel Jacobs, middleweight (29-1, 26 KOs)

86.2 Sergey Kovalev, light heavyweight (28-0-1, 25 KOs)

86.1 David Lemieux, middleweight (34-2, 31 KOs)

86.0 Roman Gonzalez, flyweight (43-0, 37 KOs)

bona fide middleweight attraction.

After that, a showdown between "GGG," another middleweight wrecking machine, and Lemieux seemed to be a natural but logic doesn't always prevail in this business. The matchup has to make sense from a financial standpoint and the timing must be right for both fighters, which often turns negotiations into frustrating marathons that end before the finish line.

That wasn't the destiny of this matchup, though. Everything fell into place relatively rapidly.

Tom Loeffler, managing director of K2 Promotions, who has masterfully guided Golovkin's career since he signed with the company a few years ago, watched the Lemieux-N'Dam fight with great interest. However, the seeds that would produce GGG-Lemieux were actually planted when Lemieux knocked out rugged Gabriel Rosado in another thriller on Dec. 6 on HBO.

It was at that point that Loeffler began to look ahead to a potential fight between the two.

"I was approached by Tom earlier in the year, I want to say as early as January," said Eric Gomez, vice president and matchmaker for Golden Boy Promotions, which signed Lemieux last year. "He came into the office, we sat down and it was right after Lemieux had beat Rosado. We started talking about the possibility of doing a fight between Golovkin and Lemieux. We entertained that idea, we talked about it. I told him that we can talk about it (further) after Lemieux's fight because we were going to have him fight again in, I believe, sometime late in February or March of this year."

That fight, also on HBO, was scrapped because Lemieux was recovering from lingering hand issues that surfaced during the Rosado fight.

"So we agreed to pull him from that fight, get him therapy, let's get it healed," Gomez continued. "Those hand injuries can linger for the rest of your career if you don't treat them properly. So we agreed to that and during his rehab is when (the fight against N'Dam) came about with the IBF."

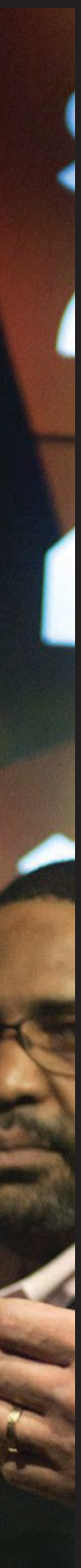
Jermain Taylor, who had regained the title last October against a crippled Sam Soliman, ran into legal difficulties that prevented him from defending the belt and it became vacant.

"We got a call that (Lemieux) was the next in line and in typical IBF fashion they started going down the line, see who was available and who could fight each other, and the next available contender was N'Dam. We were notified about that so we ended up doing the title fight with N'Dam," Gomez said.

To say that Lemieux took full advantage of the opportunity is an understatement. The manner in which he won – his ferocity, the raw punching power – absolutely captivated fans.

"Tom started calling me again, 'Let's start discussing the fight, let's see if we can do the fight.' So I said, 'No problem, what are you thinking?'" said Gomez, who from the very beginning was in the thick of the negotiations. "We started going back and forth, bouncing ideas and numbers around, and he made us an offer that was very good, we felt. We discussed it with our partner, Camille Estephan (Lemieux's manager) and Camille was sold on the idea. Oscar (De La Hoya) and I did a conference call, we discussed it and we went over the pros and cons, we went over the landscape with the IBF, what was happening. There was a mandatory coming up, we looked at everything. The truth is that the best option for us at the time is Golovkin."

Still, during this process you always got the sense that this fight would be tabled as perhaps Golden Boy would try to milk a defense or two from Lemieux and Loeffler admitted that negotiations "started off slow but it ended very quickly. It really came together the last three days. Madison Square Garden made a huge offer to host this fight. They wanted Gennady back in New York at 'The Mecca of Boxing' and with



RING MAGAZINE; RIGHT: AL BELLO

David Lemieux had reason to be confident going into his fight with Hassan N'Dam.

a matchup with another world champion like David Lemieux."

For HBO, as NFL coach George Allen once said famously, "The future is now." After a few years of helping to cultivate Golovkin into one of the sport's most important boxers, they believed the time was right for this type of event. Sources say that HBO had made it clear to Golden Boy that they were not going to finance soft title defenses for Lemieux. It's been evident for the past couple of years that they were in the Golovkin business and it was time to flex a bit of strong-arm diplomacy.

The key was to make it worthwhile for both sides to take the plunge.

"In general I think we are more for cooking than marinating and this fight in particular had enough heat on it that it was ready to serve," said Peter Nelson, HBO Sports V.P. of Programming, who has been one of Golovkin's biggest advocates and pushed hard for him to be on his network. "I think Gennady has campaigned for long enough, trying to seek out title unification ... I think that David Lemieux represents the toughest test and is a world champion and that the fight comes together both as the biggest prestige-fight available for each fighter in addition to having the greatest financial award for each fighter.

"That's a beautiful thing when that happens for both the fans and the fighters and our partners, as well."

The fight will be televised on pay-per-view to satisfy the economic demands of both sides. With Cotto-Alvarez and Mayweather-Berto on the horizon this may seem like a tough sell in a crowded market but the reality is that neither participant on Oct. 17 commands the type of paychecks that those mentioned above command. A relatively modest 250,000 to 300,000 buys can make this a profitable venture. Loeffler says that both the pay-per-view and tickets to the fights will be "structured for the fans."

For Golovkin it's an opportunity to test out his market value as a pay-per-view entity (as he's already proven himself as a ticket seller) and capture another belt on his way to what he believes is his destiny to be the undisputed middleweight champion. Also, for the time being, it quiets a vocal minority of critics who believe his resume is flimsy and he isn't seeking out challenges.

But Nelson argues,"The public's (lack of) patience doesn't compare to Gennady's own to land a big fight and he's been adamant for years that he's wanted a big fight, even before he he came to HBO, chasing down Felix Sturm like (Captain) Ahab with Moby Dick. So he's only been pursuing the biggest fights he could possibly find for himself. He always wants the toughest challenges and that's what great athletes do – they want to be in the toughest competition possible. They want to take on the toughest competition to establish a legacy and that's what's at stake in many ways for each man on Oct. 17"

Golovkin, who has steadily built his brand in the States since 2012 and has built his record up to 33-0 (with 30 knockouts) states, "I'm very excited to face David Lemieux to prove who is No. 1 in the middleweight division."

Based on the fact that Lemieux is coming in as the heavy underdog versus a fighter with a fearsome reputation, it might seem odd to hear Gomez say that this fight for him is a "win-win" situation. But consider this: According to Estephan, this is Lemieux's biggest payday "by far."

Some observers feel that Lemieux needed more seasoning. Estephan doesn't agree.

"We've been saying this for a while: David is ready for the big names," Estephan said. "He wanted Canelo, Cotto, Golovkin, all of those guys, and we feel he's ready. David is only 26 years old but he's been in pro boxing since he's 18. We put a plan together when I took over his career. We wanted to develop him and we wanted to see certain things and he's there. We weren't going to rush into the fight because time is on our side. David's 26, Golovkin is 33. So we didn't want to rush. We started negotiations and, y'know, it made sense.

"It made sense, first of all, financially. We got what we wanted. So we're very happy with the deal. I think it made sense all-around. The timing is perfect and the bottom line is you have to give credit to both fighters. Both fighters want to fight each other. Golovkin didn't have to face a guy who throws nuclear bombs like David."

And Estephan is convinced that Lemieux is not the same fighter who suffered defeats at the hands of Marco Antonio Rubio and Joachim Alcine in 2011 as a young prospect.

"A lot of people would say, 'Well, why don't you wait a little bit? Develop him some more,'" Estephan said. "His development is great. He's going to show on Oct. 17 that he's very underrated, but we've been underrated for a while. He was supposed to lose to N'Dam, he was supposed to lose to Rosado, Fernando Guerrero – he obliterated and he dominated those guys.

"I mean, we aren't putting down the opposition that Golovkin has fought but ... who HAS he fought? When was he challenged?"

So there it is, we have a fighter in Golovkin who has always yearned for fights of this magnitude but had yet to find a willing dance partner. Well, he found his huckleberry.

"I've said very honestly that I don't care who I fight, so long as they are the best, and Golovkin is the best out there in the middleweight division," Lemieux said. "And I consider myself fully of his caliber. I don't want any easy fights. GGG is the fight that people want to see. He wants me, then he'll get me. On the 17th, it's going to be fireworks.

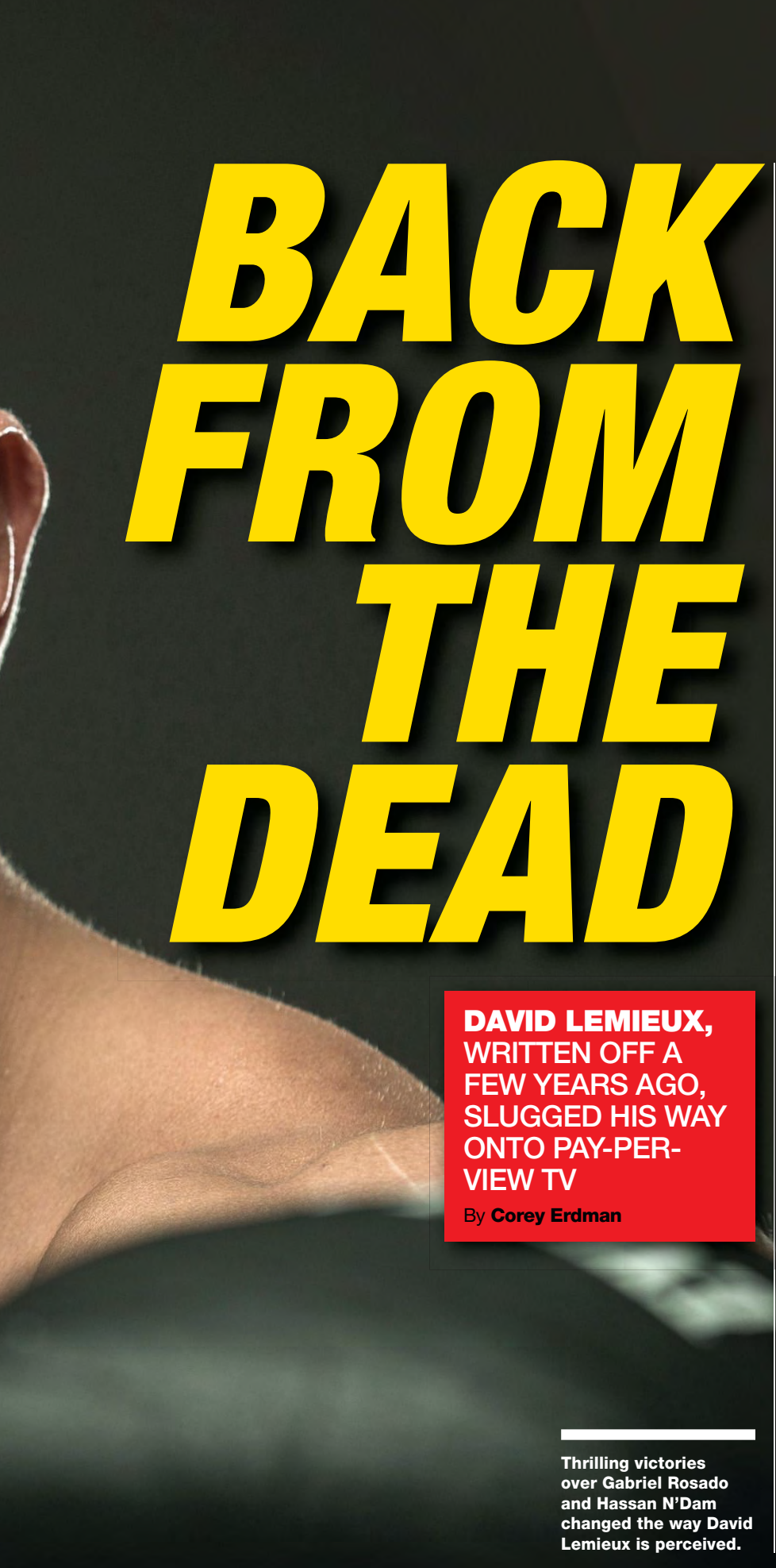
"I want history. I want big, big things. And this is another big step."

The time is right. It's now or never for both participants.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

DAVID LEMIEUX, WRITTEN OFF A FEW YEARS AGO, SLUGGED HIS WAY ONTO PAY-PER-VIEW TV

By **Corey Erdman**



Thrilling victories over Gabriel Rosado and Hassan N'Dam changed the way David Lemieux is perceived.

If you were to have suggested four years ago that David Lemieux would be headlining a pay-per-view card in 2015, it would have been grounds to revoke your boxing-expert card.

Lemieux will meet one of the sport's hottest commodities in Gennady Golovkin on Oct. 17 at Madison Square Garden in New York City, a mouth-watering HBO pay-per-view clash of power-punching middleweights.

"On Oct. 17 this will be a great show for the fans," said Lemieux. "There will be blood. Golovkin better be ready."

The fans are ready. They've been ready for Lemieux's big shot for some time.

We've been down this road before, in fact. Lemieux just got off at the wrong exit. The Canadian was handed his first professional loss in April of 2011 by Marco Antonio Rubio, a stunning upset that derailed plans of matching him with Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. on HBO.

In an effort to quickly win back the fan base, then-promoter Groupe Yvon Michel devised the perfect plan: Match him with Joachim Alcine, a former titlist who was coming off a brutal knockout loss and a draw with a club fighter in his last two fights. Alcine still had name value in Montreal but supposedly had no chin. Whatever issues Lemieux had to iron out wouldn't matter because he still had power. The fight, they figured, would end early.

Instead, Alcine, who had just five weeks to prepare for the bout, took all of Lemieux's best punches, mocked him relentlessly and won a split decision.

It was the nail in the coffin as far as the boxing public was concerned. Lemieux seemed to be nothing more than a Canadian hype job, with no finesse, no stamina and no hope of beating anyone other than the lowest level of middleweights.

One of the few who didn't believe that was Lemieux himself.

"I had a difficult 2011. It was disappointing, but we're going to climb back up the mountain that we fell off of," Lemieux told RingTV.com in June of 2012, following a stay-busy win over Jaudiel Zepeda.

Lemieux left longtime trainer Russ Anber, whom he had been with since he was 9 years old and hired Marc Ramsay immediately before the Alcine fight. Even his new trainer had doubts about what he'd gotten himself into.

"To be honest, he surprised me a little bit," Ramsay said. "It wasn't about the ability or his training. It was about how the kid is going to react to the two losses. For some guys, the mental profile they have, they're never the same after a loss. I saw this in Jean Pascal's profile before. I truly believe that a world professional boxing champion has a specific profile. David surprised me in the sense that he was never down, he never questioned his ability.

"It's one thing to say it to the media. We always speak like that – we're gonna be back, we're gonna be better. But to go back the Monday after the loss? Not everybody does that," he said.

Perhaps the only person who wholeheartedly believed in Lemieux other than himself was his manager, Camille Estephan, who signed him before the Alcine fight. Estephan had every reason to be skeptical and look for a way out after the loss but instead he stayed the course.

Estephan, the head of Eye of the Tiger Management, has made a career out of scooping up Canadian castaways and leading them to success. He guided Antonin Decarie to a fight on HBO after he was dumped by his promoter. And he stood beside Dierry Jean as he battled alcohol and gambling problems, leading him to a world-title shot at 140 pounds as well as a current spot in THE RING's lightweight ratings.

"David needed structure. There

ALEX GOODLETT

Lemieux stayed on top of a determined Rosado, who was taken out in the 10th round.

were a lot of things lacking and that's what we brought to the table," Estephan said.

Under new tutelage, he embarked on a string of relatively easy wins in 2012 and 2013 on domestic broadcasts. While they might not have been against the toughest of foes – Alvaro Gaona, Robert Swierzbinski, Albert Ayrapetyan, Jose Miguel Torres – they were all devastating stoppages.

As videos of the knockouts began to hit the internet, suddenly there was a curiosity about Lemieux again. He became the entertaining guy you liked to watch even if you didn't think he was particularly talented. He was boxing's version of pop music, if you will.

It wasn't until his victories over Fernando Guerrero and gatekeeper extraordinaire Gabriel Rosado that the public at large began to see Lemieux as a middleweight threat again. In demolishing Guerrero with a vicious uppercut and systematically slicing Rosado up, the masses determined that Lemieux had been reinvented.

That was further supported this past June, when Lemieux earned the vacant IBF middleweight title in a captivating unanimous-decision victory over Hassan N'Dam. In flooring N'Dam four times, he proved that he could beat a Top 10 fighter in the division and be as entertaining as ever while doing it.

Nothing about his style has really changed. He's remains a relentless attacker who looks for the one punch or combination that will end the fight immediately.

"David has a very solid technical base," Ramsay said. "I don't want to change that at all. This aggressiveness, it's a two-sided coin. At some point, you want him to control it a little bit but you also don't want to stop this killer instinct that he has. It was really touchy to make sure that he was in control but still aggressive in the ring. I just wanted to see him play with the jab a little more, to take his time to prepare the home run."

One common assumption was that Lemieux couldn't possibly sustain his incredible pace for 12 rounds. That's why Estephan enlisted him in a conditioning program alongside his stablemates, including Jean, Decarie and former heavyweight titleholder Bermane Stiverne.

"All my fighters are full-time fighters so they have to go to conditioning training together as a team," said Estephan, who enlisted the help of former Canadian track star Jarek Kulesza to work with his fighters. "I told him every workout is like a brick in the wall and eventually we're going to build the Wall of China."

But it's in the boxing gym where Lemieux has arguably benefited most. Ramsay's stable of fighters is impressive, with three star light heavyweight pupils in particular: Jean Pascal, Artur Beterbiev and Eleider Alvarez.

"At his old gym, he was the king of the mountain. In my gym, you have a guy like Jean Pascal," Ramsay said. "Well, you're not going to knock out Jean Pascal with 16-ounce gloves. You better learn your job and learn to spare your energy for 12 rounds. Sometimes the sparring here is better than his opponents!"

That doesn't apply this time around, as Golovkin is one of the best and hardest-hitting fighters in the sport.

There's no denying that Lemieux is one of the latter. His power is undeniable. Whether he's one of the best is something that he's willing to go down swinging to prove.

"I want to fight the best," said Lemieux. "I feel I'm among the best, and to be a great champion, you have to beat the best. That's what I'm prepared to do." RING

THE BEAST RELEASED

TYSON FURY COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT HIM. HE INSISTS **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** IS IN FOR A RUDE AWAKENING.

By **Elliot Worsell**

RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: SASCHA STEINBACH/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Tyson Fury oozes confidence at all times.

"He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man," wrote Samuel Johnson, a quote used to preface Hunter S. Thompson's "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" and latterly something of a mantra for heavyweight enigma Tyson Fury. I say mantra. He'd probably scoff at the very idea but there can be little doubt there are two very distinct sides to the polarizing British heavyweight keen to trade words for world titles later this year. There's Tyson Fury the man – the fighting man, Traveller man, family man – and Tyson Fury the beast. And it's often pot luck as to which one you'll encounter on any given day. Opponents and spectators tend to get the beast, the over-the-top, chest-beating, all-singing, all-swearing cartoonish embodiment of bare-knuckle fighting spirit while those closer to him are more accustomed to the man.

A lot of the time even Tyson Fury himself is unsure which of the two he'll see staring back at him when he wakes up, rolls out of bed and stands before his bedroom mirror. Some days are good, some days are bad.

"Everybody has their up and down moments, don't they?" the 26-year-old mused. "You can be high one minute and down the next. I'm no different. It's just the way life goes, I suppose. When I'm not fighting, I get bored. Without going out, getting drunk and

EVERLAST
K-SWISS

JULIAN FINNEY/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: SASCHA STEINBACH/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Fury inherited the boxing gene from his father, John (left), who fought in the '80s.

eating a load of s--t all the time, there's not much else to do, so I get quite depressed between fights.

"But when I become the champion, that's all going to change. There'll be no time to get depressed and no time to put on weight and live badly. I'll be the best fighter on the planet and I'll need a lifestyle change."

On a good day Tyson Fury is unbeaten in 24 professional fights and scheduled to face Wladimir Klitschko for the world heavyweight title on Oct. 24 in Dusseldorf, Germany. He is also something of a heavyweight anomaly; a 6-foot-9 behemoth adept at moving relatively lightly on his feet, throwing plenty of leather and seamlessly switching between orthodox and southpaw stances. Even his fighting style contains two contrasting personalities.

On a bad day, however, critics attempt to find plenty of holes. They point to knockdowns suffered at the hands of Steve Cunningham and Neven Pajkic as evidence of his supposed fragility and flimsy defense. There's a YouTube video of him punching himself in the face. They also take umbrage with his acid tongue, habitual trolling on Twitter and the outlandish boasts that make even pro wrestlers blush. To them, the critics, Tyson Fury is simply an act, a gimmick, a ticking time bomb ready to implode.

"I don't care what people think," he said. "I don't care if they think I'm a joke or not. I don't care if they think I work hard in the gym or not. It's not really important, is it? So long as I go in there and do my job, it shouldn't matter whether I train hard or not. Also, if I gave a damn about what people thought of me, I'd have probably packed in boxing a long, long time ago."

It's true. The "haters," as he often calls them, were circling with far greater intensity many years ago when Fury was just a noisy upstart writing checks his wins against mediocre opposition didn't exactly cash. But now he's ranked No. 1 by both the WBA and WBO, thus in line for a shot at Klitschko, and maturing and improving exponentially with each fight. Rough edges have been smoothed – at least between the ropes – and his recent taming of former world heavyweight title challenger Dereck Chisora was nearly faultless.

Fury knows how to play head games with opponent Wladimir Klitschko.

"All the chit-chat, the bulls--t and the stuff I say doesn't really matter," he said. "As soon as you get in there and get punched in the face, it all goes out the window. The thing is, I'm never scared. I'm only up against a man wearing a pair of boxing gloves. The worst that can happen is you get punched in the face and knocked out. But I don't fear being knocked out or hurt in a boxing ring. When you start fearing people in boxing, you're in the wrong job. You should be stacking shelves, not fighting one-on-one with another man.

"As Travellers, fearlessness is part of our culture," Fury continued, referring to his itinerant background. "We're not afraid of anyone. We have a do-or-die mentality. We're born to fight and we often fight with no gloves for hours and hours. To be punched in the face with a pair of boxing gloves is a luxury really, isn't it?"

It sounds like bravado or, rather, lines from a gypsy call-out video. Peter Fury, though, Tyson's coach and uncle, claims it's no such thing.

"That's his personality," he said. "He jokes and laughs but he doesn't care about upsetting anyone or putting his foot in it. I'm not being funny. If someone had two shotguns – one in each hand – Tyson would still tell them what he thought of them and would believe he'd come out on top. He has no value for what any person can do to him. He's totally fearless.

"In fact, Tyson has got an ideal personality for world-level boxing. He doesn't overthink things. He respects fighters, don't get me wrong – he knows how hard they train and knows how tough a sport it is – but he doesn't believe anybody can beat him. There's no negativity in his brain as far as boxing is concerned. He thinks he's the best man on the planet, period."

Peter revealed he has yet to see his nephew succumb to nerves before or during a prizefight, insisting instead that the only thing in life that scares him is the prospect of *not* fighting. "When Tyson is inactive, he hates it," said his trainer. "It's the worst thing in the world for him. He'd fight every six weeks if he could. He said to me, 'This boxing's crap.' I said, 'Why's that?' He

said, 'Because when you're at world-class level you only get two or three fights a year. It's nothing.'"

One gets the sense boxing works as therapy for a man like Fury. It's his medication. It dilutes him. Without it, without something he's been programmed to do since the age of 6, life might be an altogether more rigorous ordeal. It might prove to be a little too *real*.

Surrounded by family on a daily basis – he trains with blood relatives – Fury is for now a man in safe confines, a beast protected from himself. "We're a family-run operation," he said. "There are no outsiders here. I've only had my family train me from the very beginning. There's not many heavyweight champions who can say the same.

"My uncle Hughie never trained anyone before he trained me and he took me to British and Commonwealth titles. And Peter had never trained anyone other than his son (Hughie Lewis Fury). I don't think it's rocket science. You just have to be switched on and know what you're doing. A lot of trainers are only in the sport to get their 10 percent of a client's purse. It's just a job to them. They don't *really* care if the fighter wins or loses. With us, it's not a job. It's family."

Rest assured, Tyson Fury is at his most content and comfortable when he's in performance mode, be it talking, singing or fighting, and when he's riffing on subjects he knows inside out; on stage, mic in hand, audience at his mercy, opponent on tenterhooks. Then, in that environment, his confidence is not only sky-high, but contagious.

"I don't see myself as the underdog in this fight," he said, boldly. "I see Klitschko as the underdog. He's got everything to prove and I've got nothing to prove. Everybody thinks I'm going to lose this fight; the bookies have me down as a 3-to-1 underdog and most boxing writers are writing me off. That's not because the brain tells them I'm going to lose,

GREAT BRITONS

Tyson Fury will be only the seventh fighter from the United Kingdom to hold a major heavyweight title if he upsets Wladimir Klitschko on Oct. 24 in Dusseldorf, Germany. Here are the British champs (in chronological order).

BOB FITZSIMMONS

Fitzsimmons knocked out James J. Corbett with his famous "solar plexus" punch in the 14th round to become the third heavyweight champ of the modern era in 1897. He lost his crown when he was KO'd by James J. Jeffries in the 11th round in 1899. Fitzsimmons was born in Cornwall but moved with his family to New Zealand when he was 9.

LENNOX LEWIS

The native Londoner, considered the greatest heavyweight the U.K. has produced, was a three-time champ. 1. He became the first British heavyweight titleholder in 93 years when he was declared WBC champ after he stopped Donovan Ruddock in the second round in 1992 and Riddick Bowe refused to face him. He lost his title when he was KO'd by Oliver McCall in 1994. 2. He regained the vacant WBC title by stopping McCall in five rounds in 1997. He added the IBF and WBA titles by outpointing Evander Holyfield in 1999. He was stripped of the WBA belt because he refused to defend against John Ruiz. He lost his other two belts when he was KO'd in the fifth round by Hasim Rahman. 3. He regained the IBF and WBC titles when he stopped Rahman in the fourth round in their rematch seven months later. He retired as champion in 2003.

HERBIE HIDE

The native of Nigeria, who moved to the U.K. with his family when he was a child, twice held the WBO title. He won it by stopping Michael Bentt in the seventh round in 1994 and lost it to Riddick Bowe via sixth-round KO in his next fight the following year. He regained the vacant title by stopping Tony Tucker in the second round in 1997 and lost it when he was KO'd by Vitali Klitschko in 1999. Hide never again fought for a major title.

FRANK BRUNO

The popular Londoner won the WBC title by outpointing Oliver McCall in 1995, his fourth attempt to win a major belt. A terrified Bruno lost the title to Mike Tyson by a third-round knockout in his next fight the following year, his second KO loss to Tyson.

HENRY AKINWANDE

The Londoner won the WBO title by knocking out Jeremy Williams in the third round in 1996 and gave it up to challenge for Lennox Lewis' WBC belt the following year. Akinwande was disqualified for excessive holding against Lewis.

DAVID HAYE

The former cruiserweight titleholder won the WBA heavyweight title when he defeated Nikolay Valuev by a majority decision in 2009. He lost it in when he was easily outpointed by Wladimir Klitschko in a title-unification bout 2011.

The brash Fury is never at a loss for words.

it's because their heart tells them they want me to lose. But when you want something so bad, and with bad and evil intentions, it never happens. It's like when you hate someone and *want* them to die. It usually comes round on you, not them. You'll die before them.

"But do they really think I'm going to let some 40-year-old idiot in a pair of boxing gloves and shorts take food from my kids' mouths? The difference between winning and losing is this: If I lose, I live a mediocre life for the rest of my days. If I win, I live the dream. Wlad's already lived the dream. He's already got tons of money he can't spend. I'm not going to let that guy take what I want."

Fury's apparent disregard for Klitschko's threat seems to stem not only from his own high opinion of himself but also the high opinion of others – namely Wladimir's former coach, the late, great Emanuel Steward. "He always said I was the heir in waiting," explained Fury, who briefly trained with Steward in 2011. "He even said to Wlad's face, 'Tyson Fury is the next heavyweight champion of the world and he'll be taking the titles off you when he's ready.' As you can imagine, Wlad didn't like that too much. Emanuel also used to taunt him in sparring by saying, 'Goddamn, Wlad, if you don't start performing, I'll chuck Tyson Fury in with your ass.'"

Admittedly, it's a good calling card when heading into a fight against a champion undefeated in the last 11 years; just don't call it a confidence boost. Nor should you ever give Fury a shot in his upcoming fight purely based on the fact he's 3 inches taller than Klitschko.

"It's not just a case of me being bigger than him," the challenger said, with the slightest hint of agitation. "He's fought people bigger than him before. Just because you're tall doesn't mean you're any good. You can be useless and tall like Mariusz Wach.

"What will be awkward for Wladimir is the amount of times he's going to get hit by me. He's not used to being hit. And when someone gets hit more than they've ever been hit, they start to wonder what's going on.

"He can spar whoever he wants but he's not going to find anybody like me. I'm a one-of-a-kind type of person. There's never been anybody like me in history, and there'll never be anybody like me ever again.

"Try and name one heavyweight from the past or present who can box-punch with either hand and possesses devastating power in both of them. You can't. I'm ambidextrous, which means every time I switch I'm equally as powerful and effective."

The beast is now out of the cage. It's hungry, delirious, dangerous, relentless. It closes its eyes and visualizes its next meal.

"I visualize Wladimir Klitschko coming out, trying to take the center of the ring, jibbing and jabbing around," began Fury. "I'll then land a devastating right hook on his jaw and it's goodnight Vienna. I'll stand on top of him, with my hands in the air, and the referee will have to rip me off him and pull me all over the ring.

"The last thing Wlad will see is this giant Gypsy bastard standing over him. And he'll have to sleep with that memory every night for the rest of his life."

No sooner does the beast emerge, however, than Fury, the humble fighting man, returns to add a touch of self-deprecation to proceedings. It happens in an instant. "Listen," he said, "if Wlad does the same to me, and I end up getting leathered, fair play to him. If I get knocked out, I deserve it. It must be my destiny. You can only do your best, win, lose or draw. If I win, I win, and if I lose, there's no point crying over spilt milk. That's my outlook on s--t anyway."

The beast slinks back to its cage. At least for now.

SASCHA STEINBACH/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

‘GYPSY KINGS’

LEE VS. SAUNDERS AND FURY VS. KLITSCHKO PUT ‘TRAVELLERS’ IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By **Gareth A Davies**

The autumn is lining up as the time of the Gypsies over here, with the first world-title fight between two middleweights from the Traveller community, Andy Lee and Billy Joe Saunders, matched to fight on Sept. 19 in Limerick, Ireland.

Five weeks later, on Oct. 24 in Dusseldorf, Germany, Tyson Fury, the 6-foot-9 Traveller who calls himself “Gypsy King” on Twitter, makes his underdog assault on Wladimir Klitschko and his four heavyweight belts.

The fires are burning.

LEE vs. SAUNDERS

Lee and Saunders are former Olympians for Ireland and England, respectively. Lee, in the second phase of a professional career after his early inroads with the late, great Emanuel Steward in his corner, defeated Matt Korobov to lift the title in Las Vegas in December and returns to Limerick for a homecoming defense after a draw with Peter Quillin.

When Lee came home after the Korobov triumph, he was feted by the famed Ireland rugby union captain Paul O’Connell, who took him into the dressing room at 33,000-capacity Thomond Park, where Lee-Saunders will take place. The Munster rugby players sang “Stand Up And Fight,” the team song, which includes the words, “Stand toe to toe until you hear the bell ... stand up and fight like hell.”

It is sung to the tune of “The March of the Toreadors” from Bizet’s “Carmen.” It’s earthy and stirring, an indication that the atmosphere there on Sept. 19 will be riveting. It’s the first outdoor stadium fight in Ireland since the second battle between Steve Collins and Chris Eubank at Páirc Uí Chaoimh in Cork in 1992. Frank Warren promoted that contest. He told me: “I’ve promoted many big fight-nights in Ireland and the great thing about Irish fans is that they

SASCHA STEINBACH/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Tyson Fury (right) isn't the only Irish Traveller in a big fight this year.

make the event and they are also extremely knowledgeable."

Lee, whose trainer, Adam Booth, is co-promoter of the event, was also adamant that he would like to see Irish amateur superstar Katie Taylor, five times a world champion and a gold medalist at the London Olympics, on the card.

"She is a household name in the country and I want to see her get the respect of being on a huge card in her home country, as so much of her success has been when she is boxing in other countries," he said.

But Taylor's supporters were up in arms when Saunders, the Commonwealth champion, upset the applecart at a July news conference in London to promote the fight by stating that women should not be boxing but should be having children, cooking and cleaning. Taylor responded during a Twitter storm by stating that she felt "sorry for his wife and daughter if that's his only view of women."

The controversy will only fuel what already is a major fight expected to sell out Thomond Park.

For those not familiar with the Traveller community, whose men settle disputes by a "Fair Fight" with their bare hands, there are serious bragging rights on the line with the two men going head to head. Those in the know admit that this is also a 50-50 matchup, a legitimate world-title fight.

Booth put it succinctly: "This is a fight involving will, styles and skills. It's my job to observe Billy Joe Saunders. But as I'm thinking, or even daydreaming about it, I always see an entertaining fight. I visualize it as a coach but always end up thinking of it as a fan. These are two southpaws in a great matchup."

He added: "I have to pay respect to the threat that Billy poses. He has many more strengths than he does weaknesses. We are not in the sport for mismatches, paper titles or plastic champions, this is a genuine world-title contest."

Saunders is due a world-title shot. Can he outbox Lee? Or can Lee find another devastating punch to finish a fight?

"This fight doesn't need talking up. You've got two proud Travelling men going out there. He's doing it for his country and I'm doing it for mine," said Saunders, who defeated Cork's Gary O'Sullivan on points in 2013. "It's a history fight. But I can guarantee one thing: Me and Andy are going to leave nothing in the ring."

KLITSCHKO vs. FURY

Tyson Fury was born prematurely, weighing two pounds, and fought for his life. But he has always been a survivor. He has aspired to become heavyweight champion since he was 10 years old. And on Oct. 24 he'll finally gets his opportunity against Klitschko, who has dominated the division for more than a decade.

Fury, 26, believes the difference between winning or losing will be "living a mediocre life or an epic life." He certainly did his utmost to get under Klitschko's skin at the preamble press conference in Dusseldorf, tearing into the Ukrainian, labeling him as "old, robotic and having as much charisma as my underpants: zero." The antics caused much mirth, even seemingly with Klitschko. And Fury will continue the onslaught until they step into the ring. With his private, Soviet-style military upbringing, trash-talking does not sit well with Dr. Steelhammer even if he finds some of it amusing. Who knows, Fury may just sneak inside his head.

"The motivation is winning," Fury told me. "The money's one thing. It's not really about the money. I set out in the beginning to be the heavyweight champion of the world. From a very young age I was going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. Nothing else was a problem to me. That's what I'll finish doing."

Fury, who has a legion of critics and polarizes fans, has been assessed as lacking power and the technical

TOP 15 (as of July 26)

1. AMIR KHAN
2. KELL BROOK
3. LEE SELBY
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. JAMES DEGALE
6. SCOTT QUIGG
7. TYSON FURY
8. GEORGE GROVES
9. JAMIE MCDONNELL
10. MARTIN MURRAY

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Tony Bellew, Callum Smith, Kevin Mitchell, Terry Flanagan

ability to derail Klitschko's tried-and-trusted method of keeping all comers away with his jab and slowly releasing the trigger on his powerful right hand. But Fury lacks nothing in the self-belief department, borne from 24 fights undefeated, 18 won by knockout.

Boxing and bare-knuckle fighting is in his blood. Fury's father – "Gypsy" John Fury – was a professional heavyweight in the 1980s and there is the sense with Tyson that he wishes to fulfill a family desire.

"It will be my old man's dream," the younger Fury said. "A lot of my family will have heart coronaries on the night. It will be a very, very emotional, legendary and epic night in Germany. It will probably be a very cold, very wet and very miserable night. And I'll cheer everybody up with a knockout blow."

FROCH RETIREMENT

Carl Froch retired in July as one of British boxing's all-time greats, finishing with a remarkable seven-year period against the best in the super middleweight division. It was a privilege to cover almost his entire career from ringside.

The contest for which the old-school fighter from Nottingham will be most remembered was the grudge rematch with George Groves at Wembley Stadium last year. Eighty thousand fans at the national football stadium witnessed that right-hand punch in the eighth round which crumpled Groves like clothes falling into a suitcase. It was to prove the final moment of a glittering career, defined by his granite chin, bulletproof self-belief and destructive mindset.

Froch was always hell-bent on leaving his warrior spirit in the ring on the 35 occasions he stepped between the ropes and that career finale places him alongside Joe Calzaghe and Lennox Lewis as one of the three most accomplished British boxers in the past 25 years. Ranking Froch's achievements against the pantheon of British boxing greats is difficult but he sits comfortably in the Top 5, arguably at No. 4 or No. 5, post-World War II.

Howard Winstone and Ken Buchanan are in that Top 5 with Lewis and Calzaghe. The debate will rage as to whether Froch would have beaten Calzaghe. Or even Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank. We will never know but without question he is cut from the same cloth.

On the Calzaghe-Froch debate, I would venture to argue that Calzaghe would probably have beaten Froch on points but Calzaghe might not have had it in him to take on 12 consecutive world-title fights at the level Froch did. I covered Froch's career from 1999 onward, when he was a scrawny middleweight in the amateur ranks and not quite so confident in himself. Now, fully mature, he is articulate, intelligent and mentally so strong.

He fought the best of the best in a period between 2008 and 2014. He took on all challengers, ducked no one and left his warrior soul in the ring. Time and again, Froch battled back from adversity, and had two memorable victories after his two career defeats. After losing against Mikkel Kessler, a fight he traveled to in a small private jet with his pregnant wife, Rachael, through a volcanic-ash cloud, he returned against Arthur Abraham on a brilliant night in Helsinki. He jabbed Abraham's head off, moved brilliantly and displayed the best ring generalship of his career.

After his only other career defeat, against Andre Ward in Atlantic City, he faced Lucian Bute, an unbeaten, 30-fight champion (with 20 knockouts), having said he would retire if he lost. He destroyed Bute inside five rounds to reclaim a world title.

Froch was fortunate in terms of timing late in his career under the promotion of Eddie Hearn, whose deal with Sky Sports just as his stable really took off saw Froch get the full marketing-machine treatment. And credit too should be placed on his trainer, Rob McCracken, who was mentor, father figure, friend, boxing technician and tactician to the fighter. There was no Las Vegas fight, no fight at the City Ground in Nottingham, but he has been given the Freedom of the City of Nottingham. And in the United States, I always felt Froch was feted by the boxing intelligentsia, reaching THE RING's Top 10 pound-for-pound list for some time. Indeed, he was arguably loved and appreciated more in the U.S. than the U.K. at some stages of his career.

Wembley Stadium was the perfect way to go out, nostrils flared, a single cannonball right-hand strike, precise, emphatic, decisive. The perfect way for "The Cobra" to call time.

BETTER LATE ...

Paul "Silky" Jones, who was renowned for his fast reflexes, movement, and skills, finally received his junior middleweight world-title belt from the WBO in July – 20 years late.

He won the belt in November 1995 against Verno Phillips, making Jones the first British-born 154-pound champion of the world. He was given a belt to hold for photographs at the end of the fight but it was taken away from him and he was told by officials that he would get his own at a later date.

That date was supposed to be before a title defense against Bronco McKart in March of 1996 but the fight fell through and Jones never received the belt. He recently began campaigning for it and, finally, it arrived.

"It feels wonderful, like I've just won it," said the 48-year-old, who now works with the charity Heart Research U.K. in Leeds.

The belt debacle was a disgrace on so many levels but "Silky" finally got what was coming to him: justice.

Cheers.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

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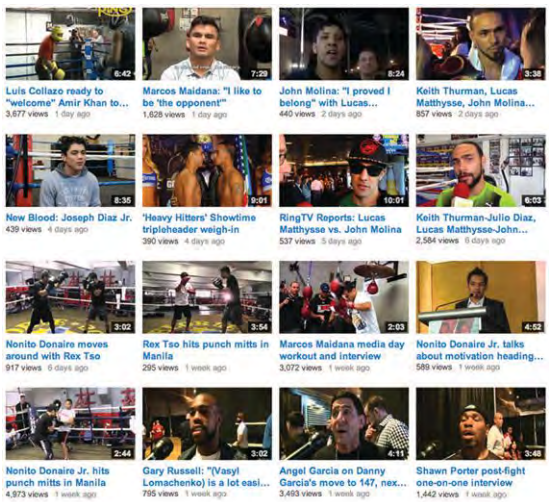

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BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."
The following excerpts are from the July 20 and July 27, 2015, editions of the Monday Mailbag.

STEFAN, from Stockholm, Sweden, is excited about the Oct. 17 showdown between WBA middleweight titleholder Gennady Golovkin and IBF beltholder David Lemieux. He says the matchup of power punchers "has Fight of the Year written all over it, Dynamite vs. TNT." If Golovkin should get by Lemieux, Stefan says he would like to see "GGG" attempt to "clean out" the middleweight division by fighting the winners of the Andy Lee-Billy Joe Saunders and Miguel Cotto-Canelo Alvarez middleweight title fights. He also asked if there were junior middleweight standouts who could possibly challenge Golovkin, such as the Charlo twins (Jermell and Jermall) and WBO beltholder Demetrius Andrade (who has called out GGG).

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I don't know if Golovkin-Lemieux will be the fight of the year but there's no doubt in my mind that it will be an intense, explosive, dramatic encounter. I think it's the best matchup between power-punching middleweight titleholders since Julian Jackson first clashed with Gerald McClellan in 1993.

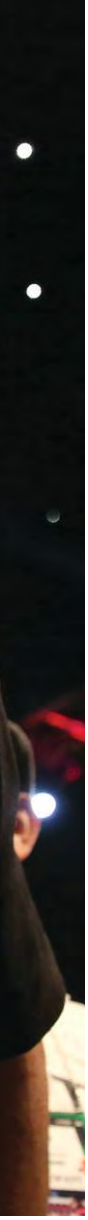
If GGG gets by Lemieux, I think his sights will be firmly set on the winner of Cotto-Canelo. That's the biggest fight that can be made at 160 pounds (plus, he wants the WBC and RING titles.) Golovkin vs. the Lee-Saunders winner can be a strong ticket-seller in the U.K., where it would also do strong TV ratings. (However, most American fans will view that fight as a mere formality for the Kazakhstani KO artist.)

I don't think GGG has his sights set on any of the top 154-pounders (unless you include Cotto and Canelo). The Charlo twins are talented but I think they need to win a major 154-pound title and make a few defenses before they can make a case for a GGG challenge. Andrade just needs to get back into the ring and look good against a solid contender. Fans need to remember who he is before anyone clamors to see him pit his skills against Golovkin.

ABS, from Cape Town, South Africa, asked Fischer if Lemieux has any shot of beating Golovkin and added, "GGG ain't no stick-and-moving Hassan N'Dam and I've watched the dude get drilled and just grin back at the other guy."

DOUGIE'S REPLY: Golovkin is a huge step up in competition for Lemieux. The man who has scored 20 consecutive KOs is a huge favorite but Lemieux is live in my view. Curtis Stevens had moments against GGG

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES



Doug Fischer believes the Gennady Golovkin-David Lemieux fight "will be an intense, explosive, dramatic encounter."

when he stood his ground and let his fast, powerful hands go, and that's what the Canadian puncher does best. Only Lemieux does more than stand his ground; he comes forward and he punches in hard-and-accurate combinations. I think he'll test GGG's beard a lot more than Stevens did.

ANDREW, from Cardiff, Wales, asked Fischer how he viewed a potential 122-pound showdown between Carl Frampton and Scott Quigg given their respective recent performances against Alejandro Gonzalez Jr. (who scored two first-round knockdowns against Frampton before being outclassed over 12 rounds) and Kiko Martinez (who looked strong in the opening round against Quigg but was abruptly knocked out in Round 2). Andrew added that "Frampton should steer well clear of (RING junior featherweight champ Guillermo Rigondeaux)."

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I asked the good folks of the Boxing Twitterverse if Frampton's tougher-than-expected fight with an unheralded pup and Quigg's strong showing against a rugged former titleholder changed anyone's opinion on the outcome of their potential showdown and most of the replies were a resounding, "No!"

Most U.K. fans still favor Frampton. That's all good. It's actually nice to see fans NOT jump off the bandwagon after one shaky performance. I can't fault anyone who thinks Frampton is a superior fighter to Quigg because the Irish star is a more polished boxer-technician and probably the more talented athlete but I'm gonna keep boosting Quigg, who I favor to win. I think the Lancashire man has underrated poise, power and versatility. I also think Quigg's a better infighter than Frampton and one of the better body-punchers in the game.

I don't agree that Frampton (or any other junior featherweight worth his salt) should "steer well clear of Rigo." Frampton is in his prime right now. He should WANT to challenge the recognized champ of his division. If Frampton shows the same guts that Hisashi Amagasa exhibited against Rigo (or that Gonzalez Jr. showed against him), who knows what might happen?

TOM, from Sweden, asked Fischer to name some of his all-time favorite knockouts.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: A few of my favorite knockouts involving two Hall of Famers include: Sugar Ray Robinson KO 5 Gene Fullmer (their rematch), Robinson KO 3 Rocky Graziano, Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles (their third bout), Bob Foster KO 4 Dick Tiger and Thomas Hearns KO 2 Roberto Duran. The most devastating KO between all-time greats is either Rocky Marciano's 13th-round KO of Walcott or Floyd Patterson's fifth-round KO of Ingemar Johansson (their rematch).

There are plenty of modern-day classic KOs and Julian Jackson is responsible for more than a few of them. His best KO has got to be that one-hitter-quitter against poor Herol Graham in Round 4. Sergio Martinez's one-and-done left smash against Paul Williams in the second round of their rematch made me jump out of my chair and shout like a mental patient in a room full of somewhat civilized people. (I wasn't embarrassed.) The most dramatic knockout I recall watching on TV was James Toney's 12th-round stoppage of Prince Charles Williams. It was almost beautiful the way Williams' back arched until his head and shoulders hit canvas after taking that final counter right hand from ol' Lights Out.

I've been lucky enough to witness some chilling classic KOs from ringside, including Antonio Tarver KO 2 Roy Jones Jr. (their rematch), Lennox Lewis KO 4 Hasim Rahman (their rematch) and Manny Pacquiao KO 2 Ricky Hatton.

JOHN THOMPSON

THE 154-POUND PROSPECT BOUNCED BACK IN A BIG WAY AFTER A KNOCKOUT LOSS

By **Keith Idec**

John Thompson took advantage of his opportunity on ESPN2.

John Thompson's boxing career couldn't have been less stable last year.

The 154-pound prospect's 2014 began with his first professional defeat, a surprising second-round knockout against Frank Galarza in a televised fight Thompson and his handlers had expected to broaden his appeal.

"After I lost the Frank Galarza fight, people just lost faith in me," said Thompson, 26. "They saw that and were like, 'Oh, Thompson can't take a punch.'"

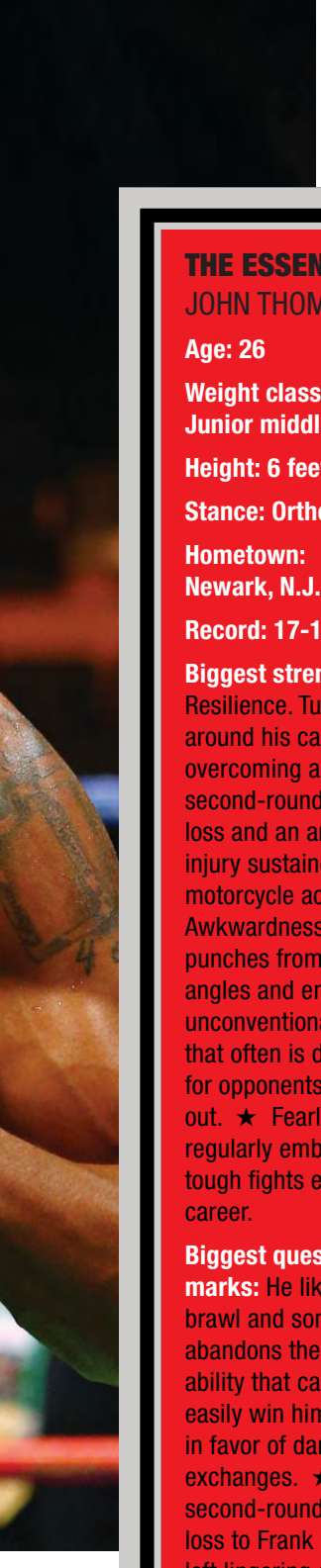
It gets worse. A few months after the setback, the right-handed Thompson (17-1, 6 KOs) had surgery after he broke his right arm in a motorcycle accident in his native Newark, New Jersey. That resulted in an eight-month layoff.

It was a difficult period but not difficult enough to deter Thompson. The cerebral boxer was willing to do whatever was necessary to fight his way back into a positive position.

Then an opportunity presented itself. Organizers of ESPN2's Boxcino junior middleweight tournament early this year asked him to remain on standby as a potential substitute. Thompson made sure to stay in shape, hoping a spot would open up. Sure enough, Cleotis Pendarvis came in overweight for his first-round bout, Thompson stepped in on a day's notice and easily out-boxed San Francisco's Ricardo Pinell in a six-round fight on Feb. 13.

An eight-round, split-decision defeat of rugged Ukrainian Stanyslav Skorokhod on April 10 moved Thompson into the final against Brandon Adams, who had lost to Willie Monroe Jr. in the Boxcino middleweight final the previous year.

Thompson hit the canvas less than 10 seconds into the ESPN2 main event on May 22 in Corona, California, but managed to fend off Adams' attack for the rest of



AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

THE ESSENTIALS
JOHN THOMPSON

Age: 26

Weight class:
Junior middleweight

Height: 6 feet 1 inch

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown:
Newark, N.J.

Record: 17-1 (6 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Resilience. Turned around his career by overcoming a televised, second-round knockout loss and an arm injury sustained in a motorcycle accident. ★ Awkwardness. Throws punches from unusual angles and employs an unconventional style that often is difficult for opponents to figure out. ★ Fearless. Has regularly embraced tough fights early in his career.

Biggest question marks: He likes to brawl and sometimes abandons the boxing ability that can more easily win him fights in favor of dangerous exchanges. ★ His second-round knockout loss to Frank Galarza has left lingering questions about his chin.

the round. In the second round, Thompson completely changed the course of his four-year pro career.

He hurt the favored Adams (17-2, 12 KOs) with a left hook and sent him to the canvas with another left hook a few seconds later. The taller, lanky Thompson buzzed Adams twice more before referee David Mendoza stopped the fight at 2:18 of the second round, with a disoriented Adams slumped against the ropes.

"(Adams) definitely thought he had a walk in the park," Thompson said. "I believe he thought he was just going to go in there and knock me out and I don't think he took it as seriously as he should have."

Thompson, on the other hand, took the advice of his New Jersey-based co-promoter, Vito Mielnicki, very seriously after Galarza knocked him out. He started going away for two-month training camps in Alexandria, Virginia, with other fighters Mielnicki handles. And Thompson learned to properly compartmentalize training, his passion for painting and his personal life.

One could argue that the loss was the best thing that could've happened to Thompson.

"After that loss, he started opening his eyes," Mielnicki said. "He rededicated himself to his career. Now it's real. He's No. 4 in the WBO (rankings) and he's No. 10 in the WBA. … I think he can beat anybody in the world. He reminds me of Tommy Hearns."

Mielnicki is trying to leverage Thompson's win against Adams into an opportunity to fight on HBO, just as Monroe was able to do. They're fine with Thompson coming into that type of high-profile fight as the perceived "B" side, as long as he gets another opportunity to disprove skeptics.

"Honestly, I still don't feel people believe in me yet," Thompson said. "I believe, given an opportunity against a bigger-name fighter, you'll actually get a chance to see I'm as good as they say I am." RING

Keith Idec covers boxing for The Record, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @Idecboxing.

3 MORE TO WATCH

ARIF MAGOMEDOV
MIDDLEWEIGHT
(16-0, 9 KOs)

This unbeaten prospect from Russia took advantage of the exposure he received in his last bout by impressively beating previously undefeated Derrick Webster (19-1, 10 KOs) in a 10-rounder on Showtime. A pressure fighter who throws a lot of punches, Magomedov is handled by the same co-manager (Egis Klimas) and promoter (Main Events) that helped Russian light heavyweight champion Sergey Kovalev achieve stardom in the U.S.

JOSEPH PARKER
HEAVYWEIGHT
(14-0, 12 KOs)

The 6-foot-4, 235-pound Parker has knocked out all but two of his opponents in his three-year career. The 23-year-old has generated considerable buzz in his native New Zealand thanks to his pulverizing power but he still must prove he can become a legitimate contender by beating a proven heavyweight ranked in the Top 10. At press time he was scheduled to face Bowie Tupou on Aug. 1.

JUNIOR YOUNAN
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
(7-0, 6 KOs)

A heavily hyped prospect from Brooklyn, Younan (7-0, 6 KOs) made his pro debut at just 18 in November 2013. The former New York Golden Gloves champion has shown flashes of substantial power and skill but he has faced only overmatched, inexperienced opponents while honing his professional craft on the job.

HEALING PUNCHES

GOLDEN GLOVES CHAMP AND FILMMAKER USED THE SPORT TO DEAL WITH HER PAST

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

When Jill Morley had her hand raised as a Masters champion at the 2015 Women's Golden Gloves national tournament on July 8, it was the Hollywood ending of which any 49-year-old filmmaker would have dreamed.

The triumph isn't in Morley's documentary "Fight Like A Girl," which ends with a loss in a 2008 Golden Gloves bout. It doesn't matter, though. The film demonstrates that in boxing – as in life – there are many layers to every story and that winning has very little to do with the outcome of a fight.

When Morley discovered boxing, she was dealing with issues more important than learning how to slip a jab or throw a good left hook. Diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder after enduring abuse as a child, she turned to the sport in hopes of finding a way to cope with her past. And as a filmmaker, she chose to document it all.

"I felt like if I didn't, I would be

Jill Morley examines her worst moments in her film "Fight Like A Girl."

lying, that I'd be telling a big lie," she said. "At first, I was like, 'I don't want to include this, I'm so embarrassed.' But then I thought, 'Yeah, but guess what? Other people go through this, other people have these feelings.' So I basically showed myself at the worst time in my life. And I'm still here."

In the film, Morley battles her demons by examining her worst moments – the abuse, bouts with depression that nearly led to suicide – while finding kindred spirits in fellow boxers Susan Merlucci, Kimberly Tomes, Maureen Shea and Melissa Hernandez. She thought about approaching boxers like Laila Ali and Lucia Rijker to be in the film but opted not to, saying, "I wanted it to be more of a real local story, a New York story."

It was the right call. Yes, it's a boxing film but it also addresses issues outside of it. "Fight Like a Girl" is gutsy and has heart and, like the sport's great sluggers, it also hits hard throughout as Morley goes through the healing process in the ring. Eventually, she steps through the ropes for her first fight in the New York Golden Gloves.

"It was terrifying for many reasons," Morley said. "I had a camera crew and I was afraid I was going to have a panic attack and freeze or hyperventilate. I'm just happy I didn't fall over. (Laughs.) I didn't get stopped, I didn't get knocked out. Did I execute the things that I learned? Not really. But I was grateful I got through it without completely embarrassing myself or getting hurt. It was really scary but I had a lot of support."

These days, as the film runs through the festival circuit, where it has already garnered several awards, Morley is finding out that she's a source of hope for those who are walking the same road she did.

"I know it's helping because I'm getting emails from people who tell me they've had similar experiences or that they've tried to commit suicide but this has really inspired them. And that's why I made the film," she said.

That doesn't mean she enjoys watching replays of some of her darkest hours. "It's hard for me to watch it," she said. "At festivals now I step out until the end. I just don't want to go back there, I don't want to be reminded."

If she wants any reminder from those days, it's that boxing was – and will always be – there for her.

"It was just one of those things that were meant to be," Morley said. "I can't imagine boxing not being in my life. I think it was always meant to be in my life; it just came a little later than what I would have liked. But I was destined to find it and explore it and it taught me so many great life lessons. It also allows me to help other people that are learning boxing and be there for them." RING

MARK MAINZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR AFI

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 35-9-1 (19 KOS)
Featherweight

3. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 33-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight

4. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 32-4-3 (14 KOs)
Junior featherweight

5. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-3 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

6. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 23-4-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

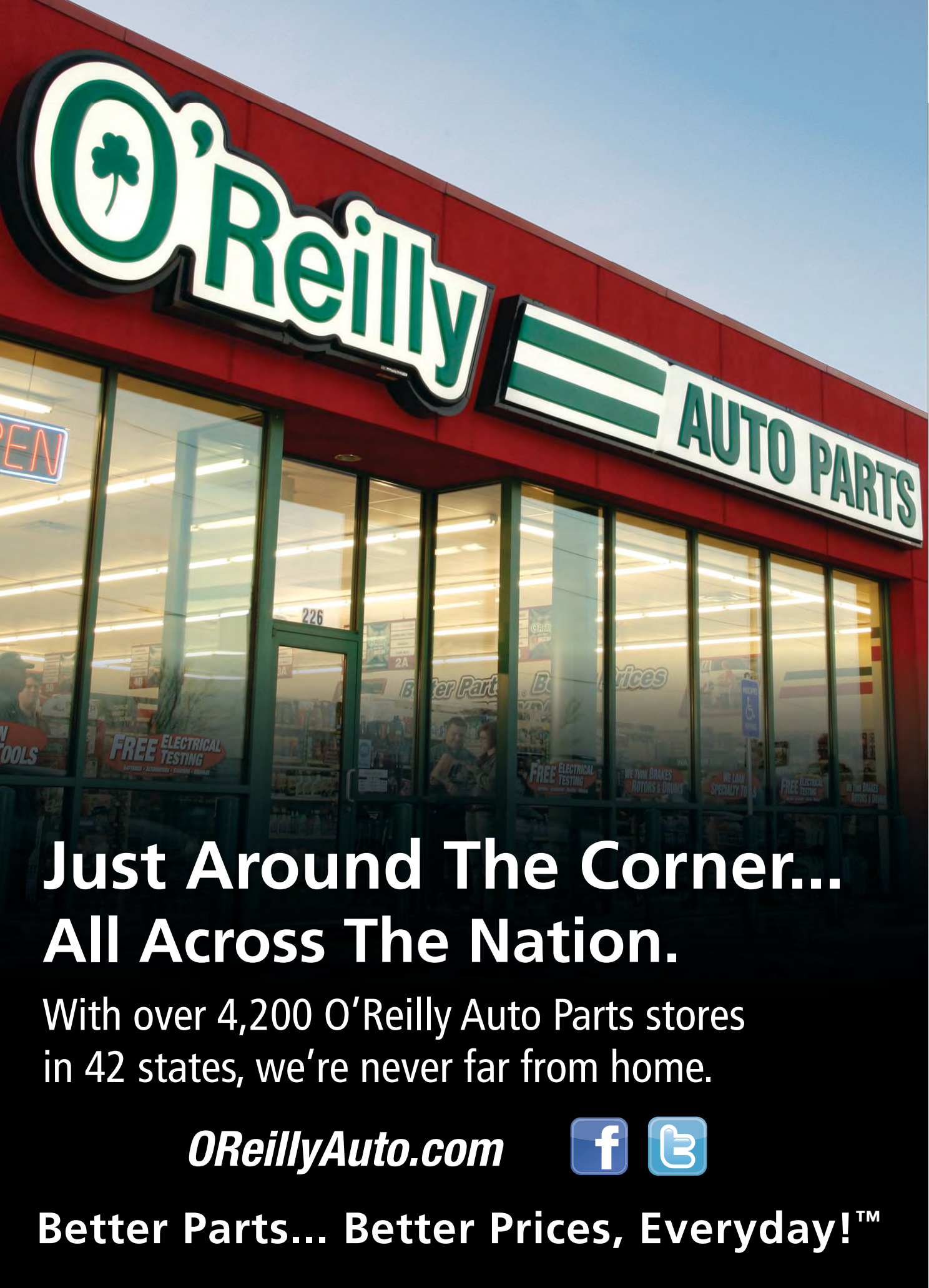
7. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

8. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 22-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

9. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 23-5 (9 KOs)
Junior flyweight

10. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 13-2-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

Through fights of July 26, 2015



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BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

Peter McCabe/AFP/Getty Images

David Lemieux's left hook wreaked havoc on June 20.

DAVID LEMIEUX UD 12 HASSAN N'DAM

Date: June 20
Site: Bell Centre, Montreal
Division: Middleweight
Weights: Lemieux 160 pounds, N'Dam 158.6
RING ratings (before fight): Lemieux No. 10; N'Dam No. 4
Network: Fox Sports 2

David Lemieux's resume looks like a blueprint for stardom. There's power and good looks. There's versatility. He speaks five languages. Pick a language, almost any language. French or Spanish. English, too. Armenian or Arabic. Lemieux can do the interview.

A chance to do a lot more is already on the horizon.

The aggressive Lemieux wanted a shot at the world's best middleweight and he'll get it in only his second fight since Oscar De La Hoya announced on Jan. 16 that Golden Boy and Eye of the Tiger had agreed to co-promote him.

A month after Lemieux's wild decision win over Hassan N'Dam, a deal to fight Gennady Golovkin on Oct. 17 in New York was signed. It's the pay-per-view debut for both and a chance for one to become Canada's most popular Lemieux not named Mario.

"Bombs away," said De La Hoya, who witnessed the hometown fighter's carpet-bomb assault of N'Dam in Montreal.

Lemieux's dynamic possibilities were evident immediately and repeatedly. His Golden Boy debut, a unanimous decision, was punctuated by four exclamation points – one knockdown in the second round, two in the fifth and one in the seventh. The surprise – and a nagging reason for caution – is that N'Dam went the distance. Lemieux (34-2, 31 KOs) settled for a 115-109, 114-110, 115-109 victory.

"I don't know how he kept getting up," said Lemieux, whose left accounted for each of the knockdowns. "It was like: 'What's wrong with you?''

Good question. Could linger, too, although not in a way Lemieux likes. It's one he'll have to answer about himself when he faces GGG.

Above all, N'Dam (31-2, 18 KOs) represented a terrific piece of matchmaking. It allowed Lemieux to flash his power. N'Dam, of Cameroon, is no stranger to the canvas. Peter Quillin knocked him down six times. N'Dam got up each time, losing like he did to Lemieux. Quillin also might have wondered if there's something wrong with N'Dam. Bad chin? Lousy balance? Maybe he's just tough.

Whatever it was, knockdowns are a good way to re-introduce and re-package a fighter. That's what happened with Lemieux, who delivered with perfect timing and against the perfect opponent for a vacant IBF version of the 160-pound crown. He emerged with a newfound spot in the division's championship mix. He created a buzz, especially among fans who knew little about him.

Then, there was Golovkin, who stirred the pot with a timely tweet: "Let's make it NOW! Not "in the future" or "down the road"!

A deal soon followed.

Eye of the Tiger promoter Camille Estephan said Lemieux could hurt GGG. He'd be the first.

Golovkin, unbeaten and mostly unchallenged, has never been knocked down. He'll never be confused with N'Dam, who was effective when he was on his feet. Subtract the four knockdowns and Lemieux might have wound up with a loss, an uncertain future and that question about what went wrong. Instead, everything is right, so dramatically right, that only GGG can make it go wrong.

NO. 6 SHAWN PORTER
UD 12 **ADRIEN BRONER**
June 20, Las Vegas (NBC)

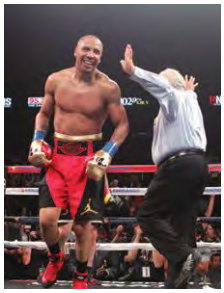
Adrien Broner was perhaps the biggest name to jump from Golden Boy Promotions to PBC. He appeared to be the centerpiece in the new venture.

But Golden Boy might be happy "The Problem" is gone. He's Al Haymon's problem now.

Shawn Porter dismantled him, scoring a 118-108, 115-111, 114-112 decision that left Broner with fewer fans but the same old braggadocio.

"I still will fight anybody," said Broner (30-2, 25 KOs), who knocked down but couldn't knock out Porter (26-1-1, 16 KOs) during the final round. "It don't matter, man. I'm a real animal. I'm an animal. This time I didn't get the decision but it's OK. At the end of the day, everybody in here will take my autograph and take my picture."

They'll boo, too. Most in a MGM Grand crowd of 8,138 did in a bout that raised further doubt about Broner.



ANDRE WARD
TKO 9
PAUL SMITH
June 20, Oakland, Calif. (BET)

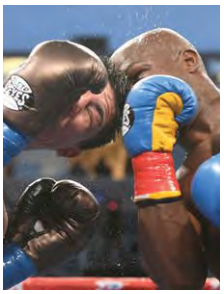
It was more of a homecoming than a fight. Welcome back, Andre Ward.

Ward (28-0, 15 KOs) re-introduced himself to the ring and heightened anticipation about speculated fights with pound-for-pound contenders Gennady Golovkin and Sergey Kovalev with an expected victory over the U.K.'s Paul Smith.

Smith (35-6, 20 KOs) never had a chance. In part, that's why he was there. He represented an opportunity for Ward to see whether his skills were still effective after a 19-month layoff. They are. Agility and precision forced Smith's corner to throw in the towel at 1:46 of the ninth round in a bout fought at a catchweight of 172 pounds.

Despite trash talk about who's ducking whom, it looks as if Ward will fight GGG, a middleweight, before Kovalev, a light heavyweight.

"They want Golovkin first," Kovalev promoter Kathy Duva said. "Above all, it's just great to have Andre back in the mix."



NO. 4 TIM BRADLEY
UD 12 **JESSIE VARGAS**
June 27, Carson, Calif. (HBO)

Nothing is ever easy for Tim Bradley. Or predictable. In a career full of crazy finishes, it was another wild ride.

Bradley wound up winning a 116-112, 117-111, 115-112 decision over Jessie Vargas. But referee Pat Russell stopped the 12-round fight seven seconds before it was supposed to end and about five seconds after Bradley was rocked by a right hand.

"I thought I heard the bell," Russell said.

Since then, only controversy has been heard. Vargas has asked that the result be changed to no-contest.

"Let me finish what I started," he said.

Bradley (32-1-1, 12 KOs) countered that, in fact, Vargas (26-1, 9 KOs) was finished.

"He caught me but I dominated the fight," said Bradley, who survived a Ruslan Provodnikov assault to win on the cards in 2013. "Come on, I would have known what to do."

NO. 5 KEITH THURMAN
TKO 8 **LUIS COLLAZO**
July 11, Tampa, Fla. (ESPN)

Keith Thurman is becoming the best reason to watch Al Haymon's Premier Boxing Champions venture.

If he's not already a star, he's on the fast track to being one. That much was evident all over again in an eighth-round stoppage of Luis Collazo in PBC's ESPN debut.

Thurman (26-0, 22 KOs) displayed power and toughness, overcoming a body shot in the fifth with punches that left Collazo (36-7, 19 KOs) badly bloodied and unable to see, he said, so the fight was stopped at the beginning of the eighth.

Thurman, ambitious and bold, wasn't shy about announcing what he wanted next. He called out Haymon's best-known client, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

"I'm a young, strong champion, Floyd," Thurman said. "Come get it. I'm undefeated like you, baby. Come take my '0,' baby!"

There was no word from Mayweather.

"Ain't nobody thinking about Keith Thurman," said Leonard Ellerbe of Mayweather Promotions.

Maybe because they've seen too much.

C DONNIE NIETES
UD 12 **NO. 10 FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
July 11, Cebu, Philippines (Beln, ABS-CBN/Philippines)

It's easy to think that Manny Pacquiao is the answer to every question about boxers from the Philippines. He isn't.

Donnie Nietes has none of Pacquiao's celebrity or wealth but he has longevity that not even Pacquiao can claim.

Nietes (36-1-4, 21 KOs) is the longest-reigning world champion in Philippine history. It's a reign that started eight years ago at 105 pounds and continued at junior flyweight (108) with a 119-109, 118-110, 115-113 decision over Mexican challenger Francisco Rodriguez Jr. (17-3-1, 11 KOs).

Nietes, who suffered an injury to his right hand midway through the bout, kept Rodriquez off balance with defense and well-timed counters to prevent the aggressive Mexican from stepping inside. Rodriguez never could sustain much of anything against the clever Nietes.

Nietes had hoped to fight again in November, perhaps at 112 pounds. But the hand injury might force a postponement of those plans.

NO. 1 CARL FRAMPTON
UD 12
ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ
July 18, El Paso, Texas (CBS, UTV)

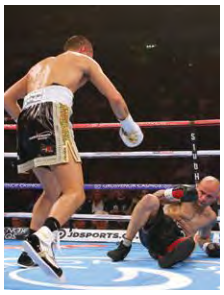
Carl Frampton introduced himself to the American market far from Belfast but was still close enough to hear from and about Scott Quigg.

The sun never sets on British boxing.

Frampton survived, taking care of business with a 116-108, 115-109, 116-108 victory over Alejandro Gonzalez in front of a pro-Mexico crowd.

Frampton (21-0, 14 KOs), who struggled to make 122 pounds, battled back from two knockdowns in the opening round. He looked stiff and tentative. Like a traveler on an uncomfortable bed in a hotel room, he blamed a thick canvas. He needs a thin one, he said, for his feet to carry him in and out of harm's way.

He eventually found his footing enough to beat Gonzalez (25-2-2, 15 KOs) and keep alive talks for a U.K. showdown with Quigg.



NO. 3 SCOTT QUIGG
TKO 2 **KIKO MARTINEZ**
July 18, Manchester, U.K. (Sky Sports 1)

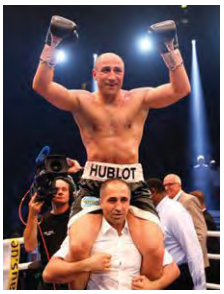
If Scott Quigg's management was looking for leverage, it found some in his swift demolition of Kiko Martinez on the same day that rival Carl Frampton won a decision over Alejandro Gonzalez.

"He ain't going to last six rounds with Scott Quigg," promoter Eddie Hearn said after Frampton had survived two knockdowns in El Paso.

Comparisons are often unreliable but inevitable. Quigg (31-0-2, 23 KOs) blew away Kiko Martinez (32-6, 24 KOs), finishing him off at 1:02 of Round 2 after two knockdowns.

Compare that to Frampton vs. Martinez. Frampton is 2-0 against the Spaniard, winning by ninth-round TKO in 2013 and by decision in 2014.

Quigg's dominance might have led to an advantage at the table. Hearn's early offer was a two-fight deal, one in Manchester and a rematch in Belfast.



NO. 1 ARTHUR ABRAHAM
TKO 6
NO. 4 ROBERT STIEGLITZ
July 18, Halle, Germany (Sky Sports 1, SAT.1/ Germany)

Arthur Abraham has always been in the mix, a perennial contender and a name in the Super Six World Boxing Classic. He made some good money and won sanctioning-body titles.

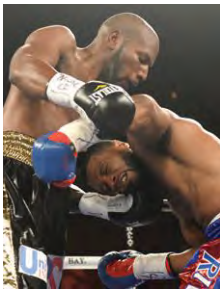
There's plenty on the Abraham resume, which now includes a sixth-round TKO over Robert Stieglitz in their fourth meeting for a 168-pound belt.

But it's missing a defining fight.

Now, a chance at one might be there. Abraham (43-4, 29 KOs) is being mentioned as a potential foe for the ageless Bernard Hopkins.

That possibility emerged after he signed a contract extension following a gritty victory over Stieglitz (47-5-1, 27 KOs), whom he stopped with a right at 1:14 of the sixth after suffering a fracture to his jaw in an earlier round.

"The Super Six may have come a little too early for me," said Abraham, 3-1 against Stieglitz. "But now I have without a doubt arrived."



NO. 3 JEAN PASCAL
UD 10
YUNIESKI GONZALEZ
July 25, Las Vegas (HBO)

Jean Pascal had his eye on a rematch. He thought about a sequel with Sergey Kovalev. Trouble is, he was thinking about the wrong guy.

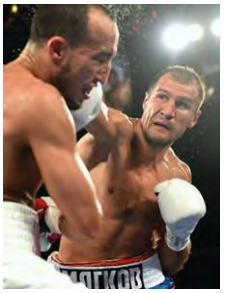
Pascal looked ahead, instead of at the immediate, and nearly paid the price in a decision over Yunieski Gonzalez.

Pascal ducked a loss but couldn't duck controversy following his 96-94 victory on all three cards.

"I controlled the fight," said Pascal (30-3-1, 17 KOs), who landed nine fewer punches but was more accurate – 39 percent to 26 percent.

The crowd didn't agree. It booed him and cheered Gonzalez (16-1, 12 KOs), a Cuban who sobbed when the scores were announced.

"I am so sad," said Gonzalez, whose crude power had Pascal reeling in the first round and again in the third, sixth and seventh. "That was taken from me. He did not win. I did."



NO. 1 SERGEY KOVALEV
KO 3 **NO. 9 NADJIB MOHAMMEDI**
July 25, Las Vegas (HBO)

There's a sense of inevitability about Sergey Kovalev. He promises. He punches. He wins. Then, he smiles, as if to say:

What else did you expect?

It continued against Nadjib Mohammedi, whose fate was foretold by one-sided odds – Kovalev was a 22-1 favorite to win by KO. Kovalev did what those odds said he would, knocking Mohammedi out with a right-left combo at 2:38 of the third round.

"I wanted to make him look like a clown," Kovalev (28-0-1, 25 KOs) said.

Kovalev wanted more rounds. But Mohammedi (37-4, 23 KOs), also on the canvas in the second, was done. Kovalev, scheduled to fight in Moscow on Nov. 28, called the bout sparring and perhaps that's what it will be if he gets what he really wants:

Andre Ward, perhaps next year in a projected fight as big as any.

PORTER, BRADLEY, PASCAL, KOVALEV: NAOKI FUKUDA; WARD: ALEXIS CUAREZMA/GETTY IMAGES; THURMAN: BRIAN BLANCO/GETTY IMAGES; QUIGG: DAVE THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES; ABRAHAM: MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

AUGUST

LEO SANTA CRUZ VS. ABNER MARES

Date: Aug. 29
Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles
Division: Featherweight
TV: ESPN
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Hugo Ruiz vs. Julio Ceja, junior featherweights
Significance: Santa Cruz (30-0-1, 17 KOs) is expected to face the biggest challenge of his career. Mares (29-1-1, 15 KOs) was KO'd by Jhonny Gonzalez in 2013 and has looked shaky at times since then but he is an experienced, complete boxer-puncher who also is hungry.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Mares UD; Fischer – Santa Cruz SD; Harty – Santa Cruz UD

AUG. 29 – Shane Mosley vs. Ricardo Mayorga, junior middleweights, Inglewood, Calif. (pay-per-view)
AUG. 29 – Roy Jones Jr. vs. Danny Santiago, cruiserweights, Philipsburg, St. Martin

SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 5 – Juergen Braehmer vs. Konni Konrad, light heavyweights, Dresden, Germany
SEPT. 6 – Peter Quillin vs. TBA, middleweights (CBS)
SEPT. 11 – Adonis Stevenson vs. Tommy Karpency, light heavyweights (for Stevenson's RING and WBC titles), Toronto
SEPT. 12 – Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Andre Berto, welterweights (for Mayweather's RING, WBA and WBC titles), Las Vegas. Also, Badou Jack vs. George Groves, super middleweights.
SEPT. 12 – Anthony Joshua vs. Gary Cornish, heavyweights, London
SEPT. 19 – Andy Lee vs. Billy Joe Saunders, middleweights (for Lee's WBO title), Limerick, Ireland
SEPT. 19 – Hekkie Budler vs. Simphiwe Khonco, strawweights (for Budler's WBA title), Kempton Park, South Africa
SEPT. 22 – Shinsuke Yamanaka vs. Anselmo Moreno, bantamweights (for Yamanaka's WBC title), Tokyo
SEPT. 25 – Tomasz Adamek vs. Przemyslaw Saleta, heavyweights, Lodz, Poland
SEPT. 26 – Deontay Wilder vs. TBA, heavyweights (for Wilder's WBC title) (NBC)
SEPT. 26 – Fedor Chudinov vs. Frank Buglioni, super middleweights, London

OCTOBER

LUCAS MATTHYSSE VS. VIKTOR POSTOL

Date: Oct. 3
Location: Carson, Calif.
Division: Junior welterweight (for vacant WBC title)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Antonio Orozco vs. Humberto Soto, junior welterweights
Significance: Matthysse (37-3, 34 KOs) has yet to win a world title. Is this the night? He's coming off a thrilling majority-decision victory over Ruslan Provodnikov. Postol (27-0, 11 KOs) is a good boxer but isn't a big puncher and is stepping in class against Matthysse.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Matthysse KO 7; Fischer – Matthysse UD; Harty – Matthysse KO 10.

OCT. 17 – Gennady Golovkin vs. David Lemieux, middleweights (for Golovkin's WBA and Lemieux's IBF titles), New York (pay-per-view)
OCT. 24 – Wladimir Klitschko vs. Tyson Fury, heavyweights (for Klitschko's RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titles), Dusseldorf, Germany (HBO)

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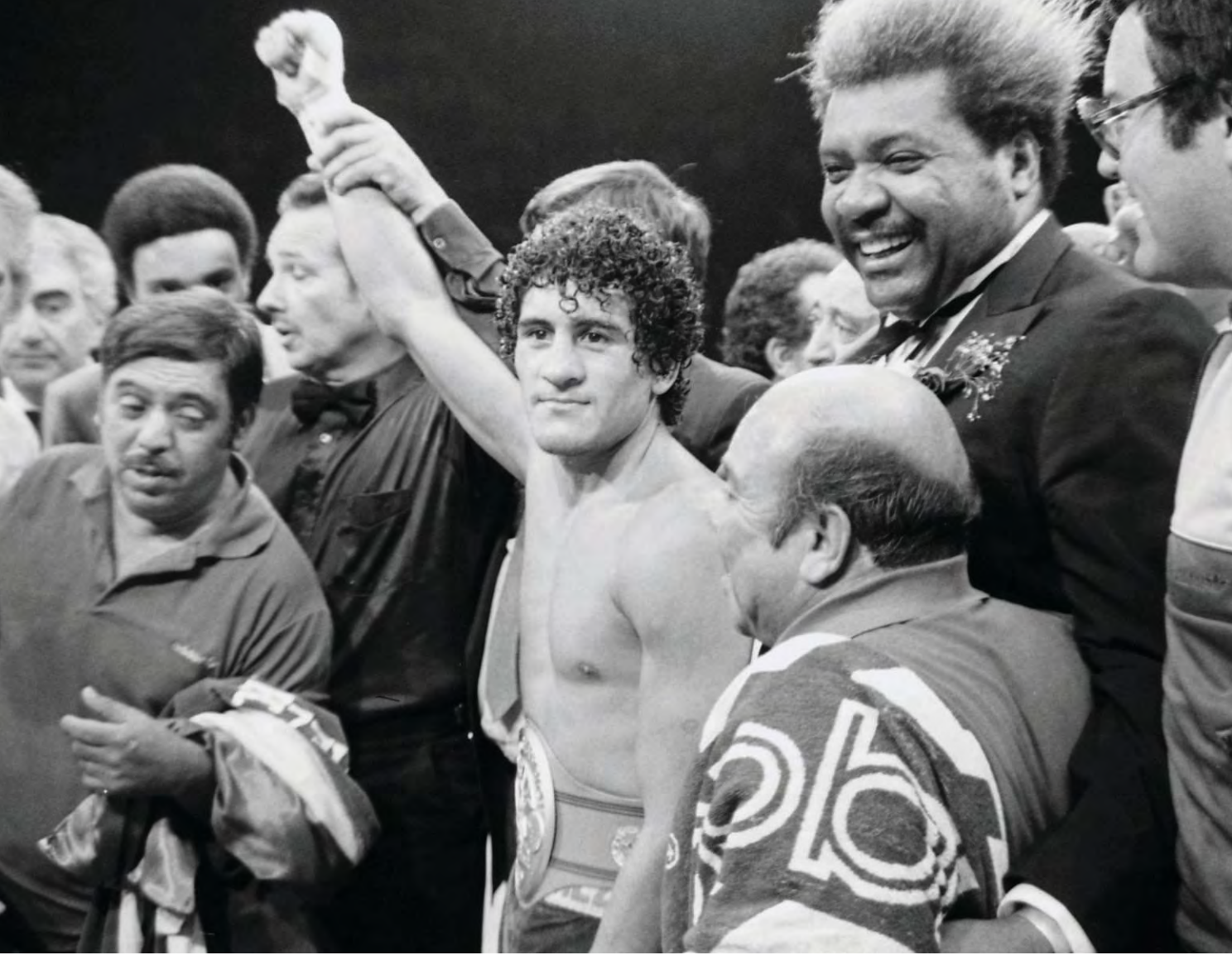


From The RING Archive

HAUNTING

WBC featherweight champ **Salvador Sanchez** was at the peak of his considerable powers when he stopped then-unknown Azumah Nelson in a surprisingly competitive brawl on July 21, 1982, at Madison Square Garden in New York City, after which he celebrated with his team. The 23-year-old Mexican hero improved to 44-1-1 (32 knockouts) that night, his only loss coming by decision against Antonio Becerra when he was only 18. He would never fight again. Only three weeks after the Nelson fight, Sanchez was in training for a Sept. 15 rematch with Juan LaPorte when his Porsche 928 collided with a truck near Mexico City at 3:30 a.m. He died instantly, plunging Mexican fans into despair and stunning the boxing world. One might assume that Sanchez, so young, was only getting started in boxing but that might not have been the case. He told at least one reporter that he planned to retire at the end of 1982. "I've already distinguished myself in boxing," The New York Times quoted him as saying only a month before his death. "Now I'd like to distinguish myself in life. I want to carry on studying and become a doctor." All we can do is wonder what might've been.

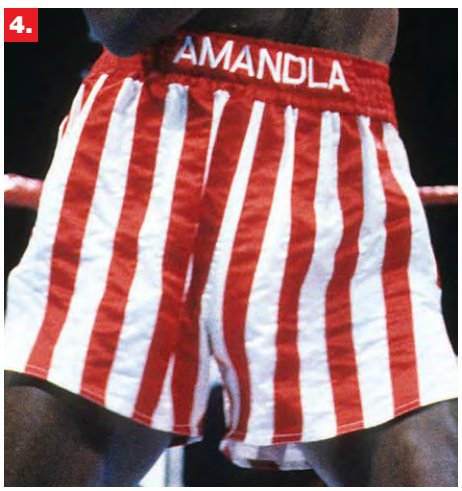
#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

FOR BOXING AFICIONADOS ONLY

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS

QUIZ: WHOSE TRUNKS?



Answers: 1. Hector Camacho Sr.; 2. Mike Tyson; 3. Eric "Butterbean" Esch; 4. Sugar Ray Leonard.

'Southpaw' N.Y. Premiere

"Southpaw" stars Jake Gyllenhaal, Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson and Rachel McAdams (top photo) were joined by Daniel Jacobs (left in the above photo), Jacobs' son Nathaniel and Peter Quillin for the July premiere.

RING LIKES!

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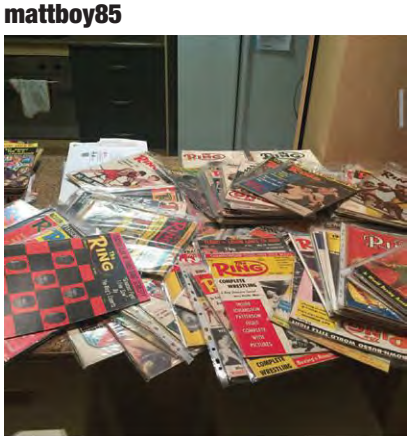

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